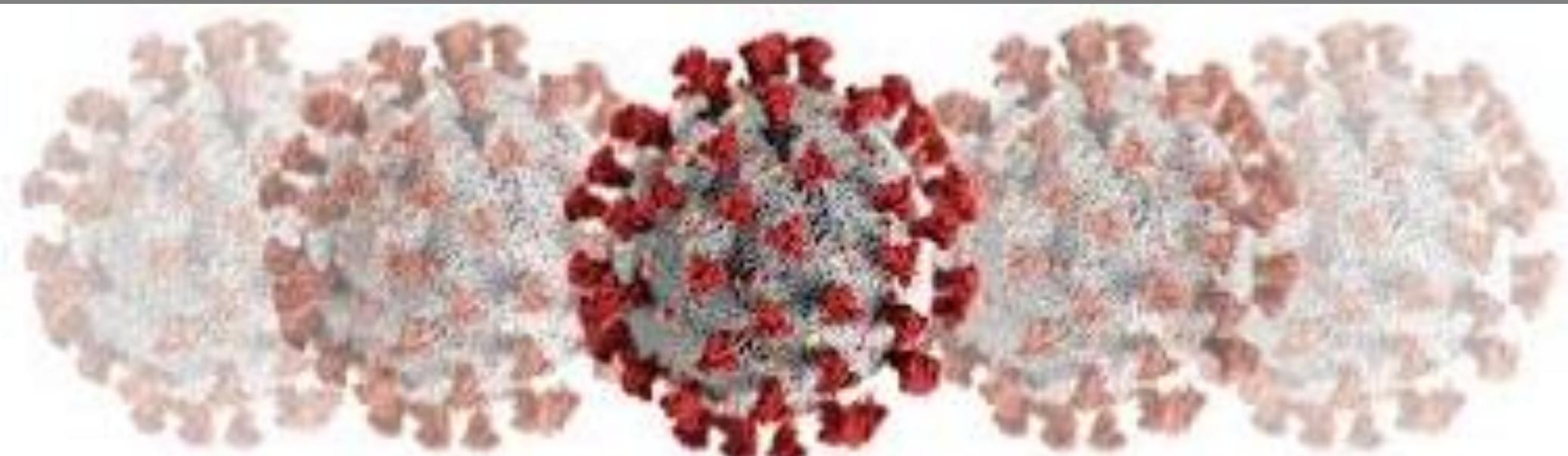




TONY BLAIR
INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE

COVID-19: Crisis Management Structures

26 March 2020

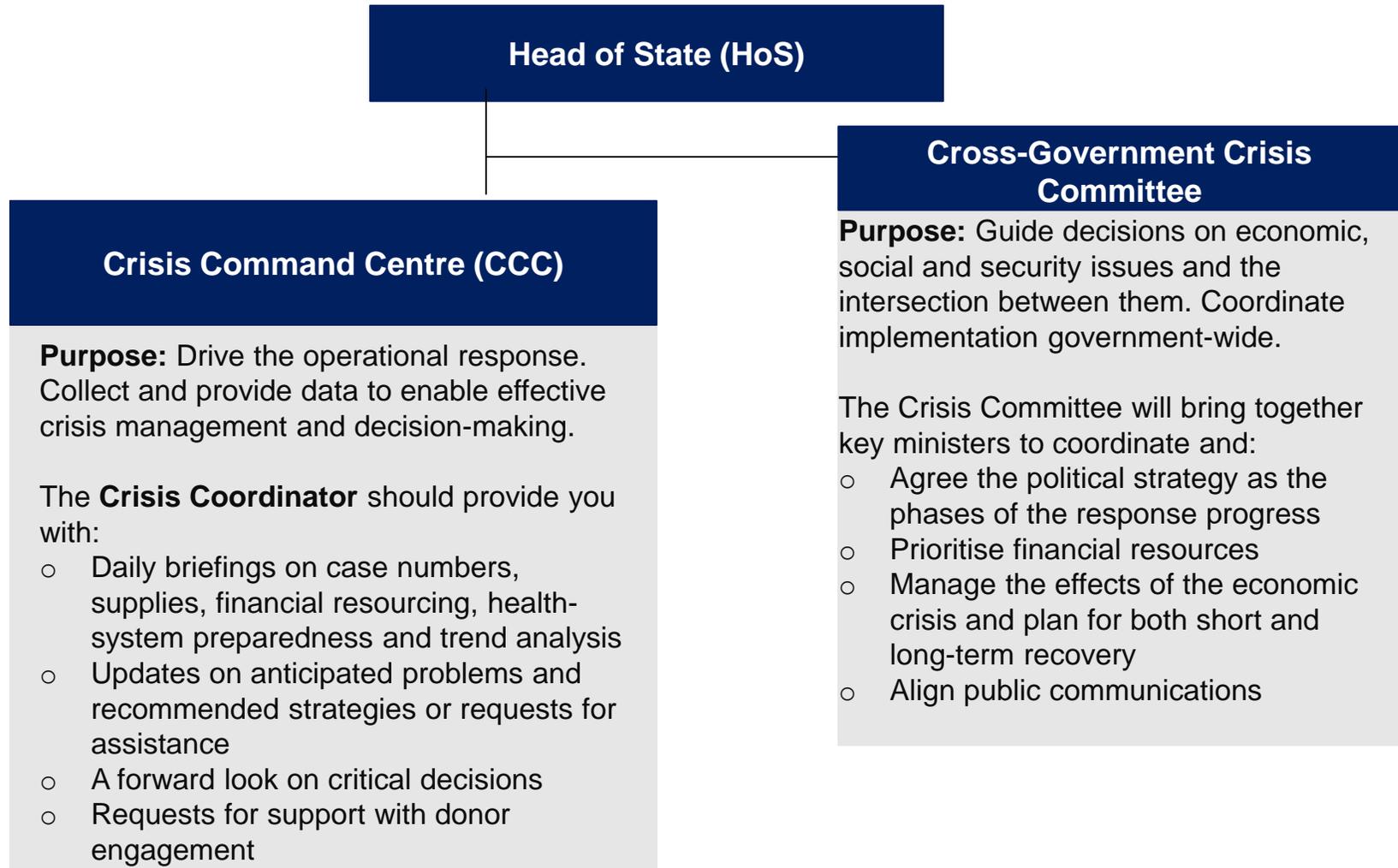


Crisis management checklist for leaders



- ✓ **Lead from the front** – demonstrate active and visible leadership. Political authority will be more important than ever given the complexity and global scale of the Covid crisis.
- ✓ **Assign one focal person** to coordinate whole-of-government crisis response efforts with delegated authority from the head of state. This goes beyond the Ministry of Health-led EOC
- ✓ **Utilise emergency powers** to facilitate rapid operationalisation of policy adjustments as the national health and economic crisis warrants it.
- ✓ **Establish a forward-looking whole-of-government crisis-management structure** that evolves as the nature of the pandemic and its social and economic consequences evolve. Staff the crisis management structure with the **right people** and right skills, with a focus on data collection and analysis, coordination and rapid decision-making.
- ✓ Institutionalise **technology-enhanced data collection, analysis and reporting capability and infrastructure** for real-time decision-making.
- ✓ **Establish and stick to a battle rhythm** to coordinate and command the crisis response efforts. Heads of state should receive updates on a daily basis at least.
- ✓ **Communicate frequently and regularly** to mobilise the public behind the response efforts, and ensure consistent messaging across all communities.

Coronavirus requires you to tackle a health and economic crisis simultaneously. You need a **command structure** to lead the health crisis response, and a cross-government **coordination structure** on wider economic and social policies



Your Crisis Committee should bring together a small group of key Ministers to coordinate and activate wider elements of the national response



Minister of Finance
Resourcing the response and planning for economic crisis and recovery



Minister of Defence
Logistic support (quarantine and provision of supplies), implications for national security



Minister of Education
Provision of education and decisions to close institutions



Minister of Agriculture
Food security and livelihoods



Minister of Internal Affairs
Facilitate in-country coordination and legislation



Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Immigration
Diplomacy and border policies

You only need a small cast of regular attendees. Other ministers and heads of international agencies can be called as needed. The head of the Crisis Command Centre should attend, to brief in and coordinate

For a complex crisis such as Covid-19, you need a standalone structure, a command-and-control culture, and a capable coordinator with a direct line to the head of state



Don't assume that because this is a health crisis the Crisis Commander should be a public health expert. You will need:



SOMEONE WHO CAN PRIORITIZE & ESCALATE RAPIDLY

The Crisis Commander does not have to be a technical expert. S/he must be able to pull on a wide range of resources to make decisions, prioritise, and effectively escalate issues that are not solvable through the main technical coordination body.



SOMEONE WHO CAN PLAY AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS

The Crisis Commander should be able to lead senior ministers and government leadership. There should be no room for second guessing chains of command. The crisis leaders should be endorsed publicly by the HoS, with delegated authority.



SOMEONE WITH PERSONAL CREDIBILITY & ABILITY TO PULL PEOPLE TOGETHER

The Crisis Commander must be able to pull together a wide range of stakeholders and steer a clear course. S/he should have personal credibility and trust of colleagues.



SOMEONE WHO CAN EFFECTIVELY FACILITATE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

The Crisis Commander should not attempt to do it all. They need to work out what external partners and others can contribute. They must create a structure where they can slot in where they can be most effective.