

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) COVID-19 Precautionary Advisory

This document provides general guidance and advice for ASC secretariat staff, members and networks in coping with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. It will be reviewed from time to time especially if there is a need to shorten or to prolong the period of the travel ban



GENERAL ADVICE FOR OUR WORKPLACE

Keep work spaces and equipment clean and hygienic by:

- Regularly disinfecting surfaces (e.g. desks, tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards).

Promote regular and thorough personal sanitation by:

- Placing hand sanitizer dispensers, ideally composed of 70% with recommended ethyl/or isopropyl alcohol, formulation in prominent places around the workplace.
- Making sure places to thoroughly wash hands with soap and water are accessible.

Promote good respiratory hygiene by:

- Ensuring face masks and/or paper tissues are available when needed as per advice of health experts (e.g. reserving face masks for those exhibiting flu-like symptoms).
- Ensuring bins for proper disposal of used tissues and face masks are readily available.
- Reminding staff to always practice public health etiquette (e.g. appropriate social distancing, always cover face when coughing or sneezing).

Promote appropriate precautionary measures with others by:

- Always practicing public health etiquette (e.g. always cover face when coughing/sneezing).
- Encourage colleagues and other friends to always fact-check information and always refer to trusted health sources (e.g. your country's Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization or the US Center for Disease Control, World Health Organization, etc.).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS

- Manila-based Secretariat staff will observe a 4-day office / 1-day work-from-home policy.
- Staff are similarly urged to limit work-related limit travel through crowded thoroughfares.
- Requests, including finance-related concerns, should be emailed on Mondays, at least one week before any scheduled activity.
- Staff must follow public health guidance by monitoring any flu-like symptoms they may experience and seeking medical attention accordingly.
- Advise visitors to defer travel to the office unless there is a clear and pressing need. If visits are continued, instructions regarding keeping a hygienic workplace must be followed.
- Advise Secretariat if there is a pressing need to work from home or take sick or emergency leave.
- It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused scared, or angry during the crisis. We encourage all the staff to stay healthy, drinks plenty of water, maintain health routines such as exercise, and take the needed vitamins. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a trusted friend or mental health professional.





INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRAVELS

All work-related programmatic travels for both domestic and international will be postponed until the end of April 2020.[1]

- Face-to-face meetings should be moved to online platforms as much as possible.
- All personal travels of staff are discouraged.[2] If travels proceed, staff are required to report and disclose the countries, cities, or provinces they visit for effective monitoring.
- All staff are also expected to regularly consult national government travel advisories of both country of origin and of destination countries before going on such travels.
- Staff are urged to share any relevant updates (e.g. travel restrictions in Southeast Asian countries, public health declarations, etc.) in relation to COVID-19.

If your travel is necessary:

BEFORE traveling

- Make sure you have updated information on areas where COVID-19 is spreading. You can find this at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/> or in your local ministry office website
- Make sure all persons traveling to locations reporting COVID-19 are briefed by a qualified professional (e.g. staff health services, health care provider, or local public health partner).
- Consider issuing employees who are about to travel with small bottles (under 100 CL) of alcohol-based hand rub. This can facilitate regular hand-washing.
- Consider purchasing refundable air tickets in case there will be any emergencies that do not allow you to follow the first plan. Buy a travel insurance that covers travel cancellation, medical assistance and repatriation due to health concerns.
- Have contacts of your Embassy or Consulate.

WHILE traveling

- Wash your hands properly (following the 20-second rule) and practice social distancing (preserve at least one meter distance, especially from those who cough or sneeze).
- Ensure that important contact details are available while traveling (e.g. health ministry hotlines, your Embassy or Consulate)
- Comply with any and all instructions from local authorities regarding restrictions on travel, movement, and public gatherings.

AFTER returning from traveling

- Impose self-quarantine as advised by local health authorities in relation to places of travel and monitor symptoms for 14 days.
- If flu-like symptoms develop (e.g. mild cough, fever temperatures of $\geq 37.3^{\circ}\text{C}$, etc.), stay home and enforce strict social distancing with members of the household. Local healthcare providers and local public health institutions must also be notified.

[1]This policy will be reviewed from time to time in case there is a need to shorten or to prolong the period of the travel ban

[2]Freedom of movement or travel within or outside one's own country is a human right that is guaranteed under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).But this right is not absolute. This right may be restricted by law for purposes of protecting public health or protecting the rights and freedoms of others.



ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING A FACE TO FACE MEETING OR EVENT

Participation in or organizing face to face meetings or events are strongly discouraged.[3] These will expose persons to densely populated venues and thoroughfares. These events must be postponed until further notice. As organizers or participants of meetings and events domestically, regionally, and globally, we must consider our role in mitigating further risks posed by the spread of COVID-19. Attendees may unknowingly carry COVID-19 and expose others, and there is still a potential that more severe symptoms can exhibit in others who are exposed.

If it is necessary to participate in or to organize meetings or events, we recommend the following:

BEFORE the event

- Follow any and all the advice from local authorities in the designated venue of the event. Some local governments have issued restrictions or prohibitions of public events.
 - Consider the following before deciding on proceeding with the event: Is a face to face meeting necessary or urgent?
 - Is there a considerable risk of a travel ban or restriction being implemented mid-event?
 - Could the process be done on a digital platform instead?
 - Could the event be scaled down so that fewer people attend?
 - Are the organizers adequately prepared for any potential health risks?
- Verify all relevant public health information and communicate these to partners.
- Pre-order sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitizer for all participants.
- Have surgical masks available to offer anyone who develops respiratory symptoms.
- Actively monitor reported cases of COVID-19 in the area where the event will take place.
- Advise participants regarding risks and symptoms, and urge them to cancel if they assess that they are at risk of exposure or are already unwell.
- Develop and agree on a preparedness plan to prevent infection at your event. This can include:
 - Identifying a space where someone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated.
 - Identifying the means of safely transferring a person exhibiting symptoms to a health facility.
 - Having a specific plan of action should any attendee test positive for COVID-19
 - Consulting in advance with and coordinate closely with local healthcare providers and public health partners.
 - Making sure all organizers, participants, caterers and visitors at the event provide contact details: mobile telephone number, email and address where they are staying. State clearly that their details will be shared with local public health authorities if any participant becomes ill with a suspected infectious disease. If they will not agree with this, they cannot attend.

[3]The right to peaceful assembly and the freedom of association are guaranteed in Articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). But this right is not absolute. It may be restricted in the interest of public health or in the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.



DURING the event

- Brief attendees, orally and in writing, on COVID-19 and the measures that organizers are taking to make this event safe for participants.
- Build trust. For example, as an icebreaker, practice ways to say hello without touching.
- Encourage regular hand-washing or use of an alcohol rub by all participants.
- Encourage participants to cover their face with the bend of their elbow or a tissue if they cough or sneeze. Supply tissues and closed bins to dispose of them in.
- Provide contact details for local health authorities.
- Display dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub hand sanitizers prominently around the venue.
- If there is space, arrange seats so that participants are at least one meter apart.
- Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure the venue is well ventilated.
- Follow your preparedness plan and call the local health authorities.

AFTER the event

- Retain the names and contact details of all participants for at least one month. This will help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event.
- If someone at the meeting or event was isolated as a suspected COVID-19 case, the organizer should let all participants know this. They must monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days. They must also follow instructions of local health authorities regarding temporary self-quarantine.
- If flu like symptoms develop (e.g. mild cough, or fever temperatures of $\geq 37.3^{\circ}\text{C}$, or physical fatigue, or diarrhea etc.), stay home and enforce strict social distancing with members of the household. Local healthcare providers and local public health institutions must also be notified.

Remember: Now is the time to prepare for COVID-19. Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference. Let's all dare to care.

HOW TO STAY INFORMED Find the latest information from WHO on where COVID-19 is spreading at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/> Advice and guidance from WHO on COVID-19 at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>