



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SEYCHELLES

PRESS RELEASE

TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

### Public Health Authority issues new travel advisory

The number of cases of COVID-19 in China has continued to increase. However, although there are signs that it is slowing down, the number of reported cases and death remains relatively large. New territories outside China have been registering new cases. To date there are close to 80,000 confirmed cases in 30 countries but most cases remain in China. Almost a third of all the confirmed cases have recovered so far. There are more information about the virus now but several information gaps remain.

This creates a situation whereby countries have to take extra measures over and above what is officially recommended. Since the last update on 21<sup>st</sup> of February, several countries have registered a surge in the number of cases. This includes South Korea, Italy and Iran. Community transmission within these countries have been assessed to be significant and therefore will be listed for additional measures.

These measures takes cognizance of Seychelles' specificity as a small island state, its vulnerability and potential economic impact of such an outbreak in the country. Below is a revision that reinforces them.

**With immediate effect:**

- **Until further notice, No persons (apart from returning residents), are allowed to travel to China, including the Special Administrative Region (SAR), South Korea, Italy and Iran.**
- **Local trade partners have been advised to give all visitors from China, including the SAR South Korea, Italy and Iran who were planning to visit the Seychelles in the coming weeks and months, the opportunity to cancel or postpone their holiday at no cost.**
- **All foreign workers who are presently in China, South Korea, Italy and Iran and were planning to return to Seychelles are directed to postpone their return travel until further notice.**

- **All airlines with inbound flights for Seychelles, are directed not to board any passengers or crew (except returning Seychellois nationals and residents) who have been to China (including the SAR), South Korea, Italy and Iran in the last 14 days.**
- **Any person arriving in Seychelles by sea (except returning Seychellois nationals and residents) will not be allowed to disembark if he/she has been to China, (including the SAR), South Korea, Italy and Iran in the last 14 days.**
- **Any marine vessel will not be allowed to enter Seychelles waters if any passenger on board has been to China, South Korea, Italy and Iran in the last 14 days.**
- **All returning residents who have been to China, including the SAR South Korea, Italy and Iran will be put under obligatory quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.**

Seychelles continues to reinforce its outbreak preparedness and response plan.

#### **Local measures**

- Intensified surveillance at ports of entry
- Active surveillance at health facilities
- Alerts to all medical services/case definition etc...
- Prepositioning of PPE at key locations in public and private medical services
- Establishment of quarantine facilities
- Importation of laboratory supplies and linkages with reference labs/ procurement of testing kits
- Activation of various Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Treatment facility preparedness/Revision of Treatment protocols
- Safe waste management processes and procedures
- Refresher training and retraining in infection prevention and control of concerned staff
- Risk communication and community engagement
- Regular Press updates / Live programme on broadcast media
- Travel advisories updated as required
- WHO local office engagement and briefing
- Social media engagement to disseminate information and dispel rumours and misinformation

#### **General travel measures**

Travelers to other places should adopt the following precautions at all times:

- avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness;
- observe good personal hygiene;
- practice frequent hand washing with soap (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing);

- wear a face mask if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose;
- avoid contact with live animals and consumption of raw and undercooked meats;
- cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately and wash hands or use alcohol based hand sanitisers;
- all travelers should monitor their health closely for two weeks upon return to Seychelles and seek medical attention promptly if feeling unwell, and also inform their doctor of their travel history;
- if you have a fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose), you should wear a face mask and call the clinic ahead of the visit.

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