

## CityNet Webinar 1 Consultation Series on Rapid Response for COVID-19

April 10, 2020, 1:00-2:00 PM Korean Standard Time

### PROGRAM RUNDOWN

Agenda	Speaker	Time
Introducing Agenda and Sharing Solidarity	Mr. Vijay Jagannathan Secretary General, CityNet Secretariat	13:00-13:05
Presenting COVID-19: Implications for CityNet Members	Mr. Vijay Jagannathan Secretary General, CityNet Secretariat	13:05-13:15
Presenting Korea's Epidemic Outbreak and Seoul's Response	Mr. Geunhyeong Yim, Chief Executive Officer, CityNet Secretariat	13:15-13:25
Presenting Japan's Epidemic Outbreak and Response	Mr. Kendra Hirata, Director of Programs, CityNet Yokohama Project Office	13:25-13:35
Presenting Taipei's Epidemic Outbreak and Response	Mr. Gordon C. H. Yang, Executive Director of International Affairs Advisory Council, Taipei City Government	13:35-13:40
Question and Answer	Ms. Mary Jane Ortega, Special Adviser, CityNet Secretariat	13:40-13:55
	Dr. Wen-yen Wang, Director-General, Department of Public Health, Taoyuan City Government	
Closing	Mr. Vijay Jagannathan Secretary General, CityNet Secretariat	13:55-14:00

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Vijay Jagannathan**  
**Secretary General, CityNet**  
**Introducing Agenda and Sharing Solidarity**  
**Presenting COVID-19: Implications for CityNet Members**

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### Three topic of interest

- Initial webinar with a discussion on how the rapid response of COVID-19 has been carried out among some of our members. Three topics of interest highlighting the central role of city leadership are: (1) actions taken at the city; (2) recognizing the interconnectedness of urban services; (3) managing expectations particularly of the urban poor who get most affected by the economic and social disruptions;

### COVID-19 challenge

- COVID-19 virus is lethal because an infected person can spread the virus to any other person in proximity (less than 6 feet), and remains viable on many surfaces, such as glass and metals for extended periods of time. The solution is to obtain adequate data on who is infecting whom through a universal testing program and tracing who infected persons have been in close contact with. Once these details are known, infected persons need to observe quarantine in their homes for two weeks. As a precautionary measure social distancing has to be enforced in the population, with lock downs as an extreme action to reduce/eliminate social interactions in situations where testing infrastructure is absent or weak
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### COVID-19 disaster risk management issues

- The COVID pandemic has involved the entire global community and therefore an appropriate ‘dress rehearsal’ for more severe events that are likely to affect our cities in the decades ahead. Therefore city leaders need to plan ahead on how they are going to play the leadership role, and often involving areas outside their jurisdiction (such as tackling healthcare, economic and financial impacts (such as job losses) and engaging national governments in resource mobilization efforts.

**Geunhyeong Yim,**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**CityNet Secretariat**  
**Presenting Korea’s Epidemic Outbreak and Seoul’s Response**

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### Epidemiologic outbreak in Korea

- Jan. 20: The first confirmed cases were identified since the virus had been transmitted to Korea from Wuhan, China;
- Feb. 18: Confirmed the 31<sup>st</sup> case in Daegu, a member of the Shincheonji religions organization;
- Mar. 1: Korea recorded its highest new confirmed cases (1,060 cases). This was before WHO declared the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Mar. 11: World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic;

- As of April 9: There are 10,423 confirmed cases, 204 death with 1.96% fatality rate;

### Korea's fight against COVID-19: TRUST

- **Transparency:** the central and local governments of Korea have provided timely details of the situation through websites, mobile apps, and text alerts. Moreover, the capacity to test around 20,000 cases a day and rigorous tracing of patients' contacts have minimized the spread of COVID-19.
- **Responsibility:** people are following the guidelines for social-distancing and taking personal sanitary measures, with medical professionals' volunteering to help communities in need. The central government has allotted more budget to boost the economy and to protect the vulnerable. COVID-19 tests are of free of charge for suspected cases with the support from local governments.
- **United actions:** united actions by the central government, local governments, and citizens have paved the way for prompt development. This systemic cooperation and voluntary participation were one of the key successful factors.
- **Science and speed:** the 80 drive-through testing stations expanded the availability and reduced the time needed. Innovative mobile apps allow self-diagnostic tests and inform the number of masks in nearby pharmacies.

### Impacts on Korean society and economy

- **Society:** as time passes, people get tired of keeping social distancing measures. For this reason, we do not know how long we should continue the social distancing campaign. There is a possibility of small-scale infection through religions institutions and young generations neglecting social distancing campaigns. Moreover, schools have postponed their opening. The government has been providing emergency financial aid to affected households.
- **Economy:** there is a severe unemployment and blow to small and medium enterprises and trade, tourism, and service sector. For these reasons, the government decided to provide financial stimulus package and the amount has been increasing.
- **Uncertainty & knowledge sharing:** all in all, the uncertainty still prevails.

**Kendra Hirata,**  
**Director of Programs**  
**CityNet Yokohama Project Office**  
**Presenting Japan's Epidemic Outbreak and Response**

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### Total infections in Japan

- Since Jan. 2020, COVID-19 cases have gradually started rising and there was no particular measure taken to stop the spread. People continued to come to Japan who were from the infected countries including China. At the same time, the Tokyo Olympics originally scheduled for July this year and the economic turnover was high on the priority list of things to accomplish.
- The tipping point of Tokyo was aggravated by one three-day weekend in March between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. This weekend was warmer than usual with cherry blossoms started blooming in Tokyo. The university was on spring break and all the schools were already locked. This prompted many young people and adults to wander around taking advantage of the nice spring weather and a holiday season.

- As a result, the statistics have shown that more than half of the confirmed cases are aged between the teens and in their 50s. This graph also shows that significant number did not have symptoms, and some are even less than 10 years old. This indicates that social mindset of awareness and discipline among younger generation are much different than previously thought when faced with non-visible threats.

### Where and how infections have spread?

- In Japan's case, it has become clear that there are five particular instances that have contributed to the cluster infection. First one is the in-house infections which are from patient to staff or between staffs. Second one is in bars and pubs in enclosed spaces. Third one are the live houses or concerts, and again, in enclosed spaces. Fourth one is the in-bound passengers from other countries. And the fifth one is gathering where many people did not follow social distancing although the warnings.

### Communication tools and infographics

- The national government had to declare a state of emergency on April 7, 2020. Many local governments have yet to disseminate easy to understand templates of the information to its residents. Many are still confused as whether they can keep their shops open or how and when one can find the assistance.

**Gordon C. H. Yang**  
**Executive Director of International Affairs Advisory Council**  
**Taipei City Government**  
**Presenting Taipei's Epidemic Outbreak and Response**

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### Model

- Take early actions
- Advanced deployment: activated the central epidemic center in early January 2020.
- Implementing big data technology: tracing technology identifying potential cases, finding out people who need to be in quarantine.
- Accessible transparent communication and joint public-private efforts.
- National resource allocations: let military personnel and the private sectors combine together to increase and expand the option for the masks.

### Practices (Taipei practices)

- Develop measures to prevent the spread of virus in local level
- Transportation and accommodation for those are under quarantine

### Economic stimulus package

- Tax deferrals, rent reduction, cost reduction, preferential interest rate, subsidises, tax reduction

### Innovations

- Taipei CooC-Cloud: online education system for all levels of schools
- Employment plan

- Masks vending machine

## **Comments by Sec Gen Vijay Jagannathan**

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### Lessons for CityNet leaders to consider

- Everyone is vulnerable to this problem and because there is no cure for the disease. Vaccines are not yet available to prevent an outbreak.
- Mobilize all social, political and economic levers through collaboration with national governments, civil society and city residents.

### Key priorities for cities to consider

- How to improve the communications of awareness-raising
- Monitor health risks arising from workplace practices and commuting patterns
- Design and implement targeted measures for safeguarding vulnerable groups

## **Comments and Question and Answer Session**

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Mary Jane Ortega  
Special Adviser, CityNet

- Citing Philippine case, it initially only had two laboratories where it could test kits. It was only very recently that Philippines has come up with five more facilities. The downside is that we have to wait for the result. We also need to pay for it and even if we get tested, it would take 10 to 14 days to come up with the results. As you said, testing is very important, but also early results of the testing are important. Most of the times, the result of the test would come after patients are dying or already dead.
- A former Secretary of Health has suggested focusing on food that can make us stronger. We should focus on farming because we have to secure the food supply in the future. If we have the proper food supply, then we could give them to the people who are in most need.
- We will also need to make sure that senior citizens and infants are strictly not allowed to go to the market.
- Data collection analysing and sharing the data with people is important

Dr. Wen-yen Wang,  
Director-General, Department of Public Health  
Taoyuan City Government

- Taoyuan city increased the capacity for TPCR tests. The two local hospitals in Taoyuan city has now conducted 10,000 tests. The city also enhanced border controls, including cracking down on smuggling. Taoyuan city has an international airport, and from Dec 31, 2019 itself all passengers coming from Wuhan city were subject to health inspections. In terms of the health care system, the city has 11 hospitals that take care about the cases, 177 negative pressure isolation rooms, ICU and respiratory system, and staff and resources for the diseases how have been supported as well.
- Control for a community infection: The city provided financial assistance to any person under quarantine to support home isolation. Also made available were five quarantine hotels with 800 rooms for isolation.
- The mayor has become the commander in the city to fight against this disease. From the end of January, the city conducted testing with the help of the agencies in the city. In terms of containment, our agencies have monitored 12,248 returning passengers in a span of 14 days. Public health professionals managed the confirmed cases and provide the care.
- The city installed hotlines to respond the cases. In terms of mitigation, the first case in the country occurred on January 21<sup>st</sup>, involving a patient from Wuhan. After the quarantine in airport, the patient was sent home. Hospitals were protected by separating COVID 19 patients and forbidding visitors to see the patients. Social distancing was activated, including prohibition of business gatherings or even cultural and social gatherings. Citizens were encouraged to adopt proper sanitary measures.

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

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**Q. What will be the impact of COVID-19 to CityNet and what will be the strategy of CityNet from now on?**

A. CityNet will host webinars and e-learning for training key city staff members as presented by our Secretary General. This is part of our rapid response program to help add value to the current implementation of local covid-19 responses of our members.

**Q. What would be the main targets of discussion of such webinar? Is it either for cities in developed countries or developing countries?**

A. CityNet's presentations are for all members taking account experiences of both cities from developing and developed countries. Our focus is to transfer knowledge and learning to any member who wants to know more, and also open up opportunities for follow-up actions at the city level.

**Q. How can we prevent community spread?**

A. Please refer to the World Health Organization website (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>) for relevant information on preventing community spread. Washing hands and social distancing are some effective preventive measures. At the policy level, expanding testing is also important.

**Q. How can local governments coordinate and work with companies in this difficult situation? What is the role of corporations (e.g. production of masks, test kits, and health protection of employees)?**

A. It becomes quite difficult once the situation unfolds. This is the reason why cities need to have BCPs (Business Continuity Plans) ahead of time and review them constantly. Role of corporations may vary but the key now is how to engage job providers and chambers of commerce in a dialogue to safeguard jobs, provide food, shelter, etc.

**Q. We need to learn more from Korean cities on their best practices especially strategies that do not require too many resources from government. Can CityNet help access and share these lessons to us?**

A. This is the first of a webinar series. CityNet does have multiple Korean cities as members and we will try to feature as many Korean experiences and lessons on COVID-19 as possible. We hope to be able to host them in our 'deep dive' webinars or use other means to share their best practices.

**Q. What else can we gather from the study of the infected/ recovered people?**

A. We are seeing cases where recovered patients have been re-infected. So it is still too early to be sanguine, although the global efforts at research and development are expected to show results within weeks according to media reports.

**Q. Are there any domestic debates over the heavy use of surveillance technology particularly the risk of invading individual's privacy?**

A. Not yet in Japan (about surveillance) as there is a strict privacy protection issue. In general different countries have different sets of laws relating to privacy. The Korean example we shared illustrated how privacy can be protected without affecting the ability to track health outcomes.

**Q. Are we seeing some changes in the way government is governing and people are behaving, a sort of "New Normal"? How is this impacting on government and on people?**

A. There seems so far to have a certain change in ways of governing, although there is still a struggle to clearly define what this new normal means. On the positive side some of the big problems we see in our cities, such as pollution and vulnerability of the poor are being highlighted as important local priorities that are within the power of local leaders to manage through better planning and enforcement of regulations and laws. CityNet believes city governments and urban stakeholders will bear the most impact brought about by this pandemic - massive unemployment, loss of small and medium sized enterprises. Through our webinar series, we will be able to see how our city government is responding to these changes, impacts while defining 'new normal' in the long-term.

**Q. Are there already E-Learning course on the prevention of COVID-19 developed and available?**

A. CityNet has not developed an e-learning course for preventing covid-19. We will raise this issue in our future discussions. In the meantime, you can refer to [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) for further reference. Also the SDSN webinar provides a good overview of the issues. You can see the recording of the online workshop at youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7Hp2mAYZG0>

**Q. Why did Japan impose emergency not a lockdown as other countries did?**

A. Japan's constitution does not allow restricting movement.