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Impacts of Business Continuity Plan (BCP) during Pandemics

Series No. 3: CityNet Live Webinar II

June 09, 2020, Tuesday, 1:00 – 2:00 PM Korean Standard Time

Resource Persons:

- Hon. Jerry Treñas, Mayor, Iloilo City Government, Philippines;
- Dr. Ruwan, Wijayamuni, Chief Medical Officer, Colombo Municipal Council, Sri Lanka;
- Dr. Jay Rajasekera, Vice President and Dean, Graduate School of Business and Commerce, Tokyo International University

Reactors:

- Dr. Vijay Jagannathan, Secretary-General, CityNet
- Ms. Mary Jane Ortega, Special Advisor, CityNet

Moderator:

- Kendra Hirata, Program Director, CityNet Yokohama

< MEETING HIGHLIGHTS >

Business Continuity Plan for the Business and Employment Sector

Hon. Jerry Treñas

Mayor

Iloilo City Government

Philippines

- During the first surge of cases of COVID-19 in the Philippines, Iloilo City formed the COVID-19 Emergency Team and activated the 24/7 Iloilo City Emergency Operations Centre;
- The city declared enhanced community quarantine. All forms of transport, ports, and borders were closed;
- The city created Iloilo City Compliance Team to ensure adherence to all national and local issuances including social distancing and wearing of face masks;
- Through the COVID-19 Iloilo City Assistance Program, the city distributed relief goods to all households, organized the USWAG Kitchen Patrol to serve frontliners and organized 240 community kitchens to serve meals in the city's 180 barangays (villages);
- Livelihood assistance through cash for work for LGBT community and cash aid and grocery packs for ambulant vendors were also provided;
- Along with the Department of Labor and Employment, the city provided a cash for work program for the 1,589 displaced workers;
- There was also a deferment of real property and local business taxes. The city approved the amnesty program of real property taxes
- With the private and business sectors, the city created an ad hoc committee to prepare for the ECQ exit plan;
- The city prioritized opening industries with high economic relevance but low risk of transmission. Identified proposed additional incentives on the top of existing regulation ordinance;
- The city has prepared a rehabilitation plan for its economic recovery including building infrastructure projects, establishment of isolation and quarantine facilities, establishment of Iloilo City COVID-19 laboratory, and dormitory construction of storage facility for food and non-food items. The city also started engaging with the telephone and mobile companies for massive infrastructure to support the proposed online classes for schools;
- The city provided access to business financing and financial services and capacity development for farmers and fisherfolks on food processing, storage and preservation.
- The city is also spearheading in the synergy of plans and programs with the other governors and mayors of Region 6 (Iloilo City is located in the Region 6, southwest of Central Philippines) to restart the economy and improve its health capacities. Among the initiative is a request for some Philippine financial institutions like Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, and the Public Private Partnership Center to present their regional programs and projects

Business Continuity Plan for the Health Sector

Dr. Ruwan, Wijayamuni

Chief Medical Officer

Colombo Municipal Council

Sri Lanka

- COVID-19 incidence in Sri Lanka and in the City of Colombo is relatively low compared with other South Asian countries and cities. In Sri Lanka, there are only 1,801 cases as of June 6, 2020. In the City of Colombo, there are only 130 cases as of June 6, 2020. Colombo's cases make up only 7% of the total incidence of the country;
- The response and control for COVID-19 in Colombo is guided by these actions: To prevent COVID-19 outbreak of epidemic proportions, to prevent its community transmission, and to contain the disease within the city limits;
- Some of the components in managing COVID-19 include emergency preparedness and response, establishment of proper channels or links, enhancing technical capacities and stockpiling, risk communication and public engagement, enforcement of stern public health measures based on epidemiological analysis, mechanism for incident and case management at the community level, trace, test, quarantine, lockdown and quarantine-curfew;
- The early and compulsory hospitalization of all COVID positive cases resulted to low mortality with only two deaths in Colombo and 11 deaths in Sri Lanka;
- Mandatory self and home quarantine for all the first and second contacts have resulted to further prevention of spread to remarkable level;
- Vigorous COVID-19 surveillance, contact tracing, and public health measures also resulted to low case reporting in the city;
- Proactive case detection also leads to near COVID-19 zero scenario;
- The exit strategy of Colombo includes maintaining social and physical distancing, PCR testing and antibody testing, house quarantine and disease surveillance among imported cases, continue with our excellent contact tracing and containment measures, continuous public awareness on hand hygiene, physical distancing etc. and timely referral of contacts and suspected cases for tertiary care when needed
- For now, Colombo is experiencing only imported cases. The post COVID-19 strategy of Colombo includes building up cities' exist infrastructure and systems for COVID-19 containment, lifting the city-level quarantine, imposing curfews, operate government and private offices, hotels, restaurants, eateries, beauty parlors, factories, construction sites. The airport will be open by August 01, 2020;
- The city looks forward to implement business continuity plan for its health and other sectors through early emergency preparedness and response, establishment of proper channels, enhancing technical capacities, enforcement of stern public health measures, incident and case management mechanism at the community level, targeted and timely PCR testing, compulsory hospitalization, and proactive and prompt contact tracing with the help of state intelligence service.

Business Continuity Plan for the Education Sector

Dr. Jay Rajasekera

Vice President and Dean, Graduate School of Business and Commerce

Tokyo International University

Japan

- Typical BCP concept in Japan is focused on fire, earthquake, and typhoon.
- Japan is quite well prepared with an example of 71-page document of guidebook for disaster. In a university, “reputation” or “bad publicity” caused by even a single infection can have lasting negative impact;
- Internet and e-Learning software has provided acceptable alternatives to the face to face form of education;
- Zoom is already popular and in use in universities, business meetings, training sessions in Japan. The use of iPhone and Google has dramatically increased as students use of education software. However, not all classes are online. Using laboratory classes such as chemistry is postponed.

Comments / Open Session

Dr. Vijay Jagannathan

Secretary General

CityNet

- Secretary General Dr. Jagannathan commended on three speakers. He said that it is heartening to see how CityNet members are doing. Most importantly, Iloilo and Colombo have exhibited true leadership.
- As for CityNet, it will use its members’ experience to showcase the good examples and convert them into training modules. Good practices come not only from Seoul and Yokohama but in other parts of the network as well;
- The two presenters – Iloilo and Colombo - have demonstrated the importance of careful planning. There is a long tradition of effective disaster risk planning in the case of Iloilo;
- More interesting, according to Sec. Gen. Dr. Jagannathan, is how City of Iloilo incorporates the poor in the city’s business continuity plan. The poor have become the worst hit by pandemic and social distancing. Other minorities like the Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders are also prioritized. It speaks volumes on the way the mayor manages the city;
- Colombo has an excellent surveillance system. A testament through the strength of the institutions, added Sec. Gen. Dr. Jagannathan;
- Sec. Gen. Dr. Jagannathan said that in the presentation of Dr. Rajasekera, there is an ongoing benefit through the digital revolution. CityNet Secretariat is thinking as to how digital data can be used by the city not only in managing disasters but also in the development of its business continuity plan.
- CityNet Yokohama Director Kendra Hirata asked Dr. Wijayamuni (Colombo) on the city’s plan on how it will continue to raise public awareness in the coming months?

- Dr. Wijayamuni said in the case of Colombo, a lot of people think the COVID-19 is over but it is otherwise. There can be second and third waves. The awareness can be done at both local and national levels. There is a continuing awareness being conducted. Printed media are being used quite extensively. We need to remind people on social distancing, hand hygiene among others. When it comes to the city level, its health education unit is reaching out especially to the low income groups, which comprise 45% of the city. The city uses posters, leaflets, and public access system at district level.

Ms. Mary Jane Ortega
Special Advisor
CityNet

- Ms. Ortega, Special Advisor to CityNet, congratulated the resource persons. She is proud of Iloilo and Colombo having the perfect vision way back in 1987 when CityNet was just being organized. A local government needs to be capacitated and Iloilo and Colombo have succeeded because they utilize very good networking under leadership. They have done the leadership pathway. They have seen good models and now, they are now the good models, Ms. Ortega added;
- As for Dr. Rajasekera's presentation. Ms. Ortega said online education can be a good alternative for college and post graduate students. The problem however lies with the basic education. Children at a young age need to socialize. How do we want to socialize our children in this time of pandemic, Ms. Ortega asked? She suggested to revisit the home education model, building education through the community.