DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SEYCHELLES

TRAVEL & HEALTH ADVISORY

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH 2020

Overview and situation analysis

As of 19th March 2020, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has almost reached 300,000 in 175 different countries, territories and areas. All European countries have registered confirmed cases, with the rate of infection rising rapidly even where restrictive measures are being taken. WHO has declared Europe as the present epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a significant increase in numbers and community transmission of new infections. According to the WHO situation report of 19th March 2020, the total number of deaths globally stands at over 11,000 and Italy is now the country with the most deaths, reporting half the total deaths worldwide on 19th March 2020.

The epidemic does not show signs of slowing down in most places. Community transmission is now occurring to different degrees on all continents. The United States of America (USA) and Australia have also reported a significant increase in the number of new cases. Countries in the African region have also reported new cases. These include South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Mauritius. Containment will continue to be a challenge worldwide and countries are gradually implementing stricter measures. Flight bookings and arrivals into Seychelles have already significantly declined, showing signs of adverse impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and other industries. However, with the outbreak escalating in Europe, the epicentre, the possibility of having more passengers infected with COVID-19 who have already arrived in Seychelles, remains. Seychelles needs to continue focusing its resources on dealing with the current situation locally and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on its citizens, hence the implementation of the following measures.

Revised travel measures:
- **All Seychelles citizens and residents are banned from travelling abroad, effective as of Monday 23rd March 2020, for a period of 30 days.**

With immediate effect

- All foreign workers holding a GOP are not allowed to return until further notice. No new GOPs are to be issued.

- All Seychellois nationals who are presently in countries which have imposed a ban on international travel are strongly advised to comply with local preventive measures, including social distancing, being implemented in those particular countries and to avoid any travel or other movement that increases their risk of getting infected.

- Any passenger who has been to ANY country in Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America and Australia in the last 14 days (except returning Seychellois citizens) will **NOT** be allowed to enter Seychelles.

- In the event that a person who has been to ANY country in Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America and Australia in the last 14 days (except returning Seychellois citizens) arrives in Seychelles, he/she will not be allowed entry and the carrier airline or vessel will be responsible for the immediate return of the passenger.

- All returning Seychellois citizens from China, including the SAR, South Korea, Iran and any country in Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America, and Australia will be placed under obligatory quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

- All arriving passengers will be subjected to additional health screening upon arrival and may be subjected to quarantine.

- All airlines with inbound flights for Seychelles, are directed not to board any passengers or crew (except returning Seychellois citizens) who have been to China (including the SAR), South Korea, Iran, Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America and Australia.

- Any person arriving in Seychelles by sea (except returning Seychellois citizens) will not be allowed to disembark if he/she has been to China, (including the SAR), South Korea, Iran, Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America and Australia in the last 14 days.

- As of 10th March 2020, all cruise ships are not allowed entry into Seychelles' waters until further notice.

- All leisure boats will not be allowed entry into Seychelles' waters until further notice.

- All boat and pleasure craft excursions and activities must be scaled down.

- Persons from any marine vessel will not be allowed to disembark in Seychelles if any passenger or crew on board has been to China, South Korea, Iran, Europe (as defined by the annexed list, and including the French Departments of Reunion and Mayotte), the United States of America and Australia in the last 14 days.

- 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 and possible contacts.

General directives until further notice:
- All public gatherings which attract crowds or compromise social distancing, are strictly forbidden. This applies to places which include, but are not limited to:
    o Religious services and gatherings at all locations;
    o Public meetings
    o Cinemas and theatres;
    o Musical shows and concerts;
    o Bars, nightclubs, discotheques and casinos;
    o Parties, celebrations and large functions;
    o Fun fairs, fancy fairs, and bring and buy sales;
    o Political gatherings;
    o Beach parties and picnics;
    o Matches, sporting competitions, and other sporting events; and
    o Any other close-contact events and gatherings.

- **No permission will be granted by the police for any public gatherings.**

  Organisers of such events are required to cancel or postpone the gathering until further notice.

- Funerals will be conducted only under strict guidelines*.

Guidance for the Population

- You are encouraged to make a special effort to observe good personal hygiene at all times;
- You must avoid going to public places if you have a respiratory condition that is making you cough or sneeze;
- A face mask is only useful if you have respiratory symptoms, such as a cough or runny nose; or if you are taking care of a sick person with respiratory illness;
- Practise frequent hand washing with soap (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to the toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing); and use hand sanitisers where available;
- Cover your mouth with a single-use tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose of the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately; then, wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitisers;
- If you have a fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose), you should wear a face mask and call your clinic for further advice.
- Members of the public are strongly encouraged to practise social distancing in all public spaces, vehicles and boats.
- Employers are urged to permit their staff to work from home and to use other innovative ideas as much as possible.

WHO continues to emphasise the need for countries to enhance preparedness to respond to cases and to take all mitigating measures required, without creating panic. Seychelles continues to reinforce its outbreak preparedness and response plan. The Department of Health wishes to thank all partners and stakeholders for their support and understanding.

-End-

Annex: LIST OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE

A
Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan

B
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria

C
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic (Czechia)

D
Denmark

E
Estonia

F
Finland
France

G
Georgia
Germany
Greece

H
Hungary

I
Iceland
Ireland
Italy

K
Kazakhstan
Kosovo

L
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg

M
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Montenegro

N
Netherlands
North Macedonia (formerly Macedonia)
Norway

P
Poland
Portugal

R
Romania
Russia

S
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland

T
Turkey

U
Ukraine
United Kingdom (UK)

V
Vatican City