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## IMS meeting for Novel Coronavirus presided over by the Prime Minister

- Discussing future responses to Novel Coronavirus infection, etc. -

- ☐ The expanded Central Incidence Management System for Novel Coronavirus (IMS) held a meeting presided over by the Prime Minister and discussed future plans to respond to Novel Coronavirus infection and control the operation of facilities frequented by large groups of people, the status of and response to the supply of masks, and the third evacuation of Korean citizens from Wuhan.

### 1. Response to Novel Coronavirus infection (IMS)

- ☐ Following its response plan announced on February 2, IMS reaffirmed its position to **step up the nation's infection control in a preemptive and aggressive manner** by keeping track of the latest developments regarding patients in Korea and abroad.

○ From February 4 onwards, all foreigners with a history of visiting or

staying in Hubei over the past 14 days **are denied entry**, and all travelers, both Korean and foreign nationals, from China are subject to the special immigration procedures. Through such measures, inbound travelers from China dropped by 60% from 13,000 on February 2 to 5,200 on February 8.

\* Special immigration procedures: The arrivals hall dedicated to travelers from China was opened to individually confirm the domestic location of residence and contact information of all inbound travelers, both Korean and foreign nationals, from China before permitting entry.

○ The number of cases of denial of entry requested at the point of departure in China from 00:00 on February 4 to 18:00 yesterday was confirmed to stand at 499.

□ First, IMS decided to implement measures to **further block the entry of Novel Coronavirus into Korea.**

○ For the special immigration procedures, the self-diagnosis mobile app will be used to help monitor the health conditions of both Korean and foreign nationals and provide guidance on follow-up actions (daily physical checkup, how and when to contact 1399 or screening clinics, etc.).

\* Pilot operation from February 10 to 11 and implementation on February 12

- In addition, **monitoring for travelers from China** will be further tightened by **collecting the self-diagnosis results** on a daily basis, etc., and the **quarantine** for providing information on the code of conduct when detecting any sign of illness will be increased.

○ It was decided to **urge citizens to refrain from traveling to those**

regions confirmed to have community-associated infections and deliver warnings to overseas travelers for adherence to the code of conduct for personal hygiene and self-restraint from visiting venues frequented by large groups of people via text messages, broadcasts, and website notifications **when deemed necessary**.

- In order to guard against the entry of the virus from regions other than China, the scope of travel history information accessible by healthcare providers and pharmacies via the Patient Status Checking System, ITS, and DUR will be progressively expanded.

\* (Phase 1) Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (from February 11 onwards) → (Phase 2) Japan and Hong Kong (from February 13 onwards) → (Phase 3) Taiwan, Malaysia, and Macao (from February 17 onwards)

- Second, further measures will be taken to block the spread of the virus within the community through the early detection and diagnosis of infections.

- Those subject to self-isolation, including contacts of confirmed cases, will be required to stay in isolation for 14 days, and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety will take full responsibility for closely monitoring and stringently managing those under isolation in cooperation with local governments, police, etc.

- The police and local governments will join hands and rapidly take action in the cases of those who fail to abide by isolation requirements and those whose whereabouts are unidentified.
- The bill for the amendment of the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act has been tabled to increase the fine for those who fail to abide by isolation requirements\*.

\* Currently, a fine of KRW 3 million or less → Imprisonment with labor for 1 year or less or a fine of KRW 20 million or less (proposed by

National Assembly Member Ki Dong-min on February 6, 2020)

- In addition, **more facilities to put contacts under isolation will be designated for different cities and provinces** so that the respective local governments can accommodate **those with difficulties in carrying out self-isolation at such facilities.**
- \* Currently, facilities at 17 locations have been designated to accommodate 793 contacts. More will be designated by taking each local government's situation into consideration.
- Each local government will **activate the local disaster safety management center** headed by a city mayor or provincial governor, **take all-out measures by mobilizing all administrative staff and material sources possible, and establish a system that enables public health centers to focus on infection control.**
- **Supplies of diagnostic test kits will be drastically increased to ensure early patient detection.**
- The testing institutions have been expanded to encompass **private healthcare providers in addition to city- and province-level Public Health and Environment Research Institutes** (February 7), and **supplies of diagnostic test kits have been increased dramatically (200→3,000 per day).** IMS plans to further expand supplies of diagnostic test kits to enable 10,000 diagnostic tests per day, which is three times higher than the current level, by the end of February by partnering with more producers and private testing institutions.
- **Diagnostic tests will be conducted at the discretion of physicians for those without a history of travel to China but with signs of respiratory problems to ensure the early detection of infections, as well as for those who have been hospitalized for pneumonia of unknown cause and are found to have traveled to China, etc.**
- In order to encourage healthcare institutions, etc., to cooperate in

infection prevention, compensation for losses resulting from Novel Coronavirus will be provided, and ways to provide such compensation even before the virus outbreak ends will be reviewed.

- Financial aid for **living expenses\*** and **paid leave\*\*** will be provided to those under self-isolation and their employers, respectively.

\* **(Living expenses)** <sup>(Target)</sup> Those isolated after receiving the notice of isolation <sup>(Amount)</sup> Based on the legally specified emergency aid and support (KRW 1.23 million for a four-person household)

\*\* **(Paid leave)** <sup>(Target)</sup> Employers who provided paid leave for isolation <sup>(Amount)</sup> Based on each individual's daily wage (up to KRW 130,000 per day)

☐ Third, **preemptive response plans** will be set up to guard against the spread of infection within the community.

- To prepare for the occurrence of multiple patients within the community, city and provincial governments will **secure sufficient beds and healthcare staff** in cooperation with both public and private healthcare providers.

- IMS has also developed plans to operate **negative-pressure isolation rooms**. In the first phase, 198 beds currently designated by the government will be utilized. In the second phase, negative-pressure isolation rooms at regional hub hospitals and infectious disease control institutions such as public hospitals, local clinics, and local military hospitals will be utilized, in addition to those at general tertiary hospitals.

- Staff for **prompt on-site epidemic prevention and epidemiological investigations** will be reinforced by expanding the number of central immediate response teams from 10 to 30 and improving the work conditions and recruitment method for epidemiological investigation officers.



- \* An immediate response team consists of infection control officers and epidemiological investigation officers from KCDC as well as private-sector experts in epidemiology, infectious diseases, and preventive medicine. The teams are dispatched to sites of infection and take charge of identifying the situation and controlling the sites.
- To this end, **the maximum number of positions of professional fixed-term epidemiological investigation officers** will be adjusted upwards, while also improving the recruitment method (to include special recruitment, etc., led by KCDC) to **resolve difficulties in hiring the officers and fill vacancies rapidly.**
- IMS will focus on improving its readiness to combat Novel Coronavirus, for which **tested treatment options and vaccines have yet to be developed.**
- **The Central Clinical TF\*** operated by the National Medical Center will take the lead in **establishing recommendations for standard treatment options based on patient care cases.**
- \* Central Clinical TF for Novel Coronavirus: Network of physicians in charge of confirmed cases hospitalized in beds for isolated treatment designated by the government
- IMS has also initiated projects to **develop vaccines and therapeutic agents based on genome sequence research, etc.,** mainly led by Korea National Institute of Health, etc., while joining hands with relevant ministries to enhance R&D.
- Lastly, IMS is focusing on **accurately and promptly communicating only information with factual grounds** to resolve the public's concerns and help people lead their daily lives without fear.
- In particular, **guidelines based on medical and scientific evidence**

relating to the use of facilities frequented by large groups of people, sterilization, and participation in events will be distributed to keep the public properly and promptly informed.

\* (Examples) ▲ Even if visited by a confirmed case, a facility may resume its operation the day after sterilization (sterilization guidelines). ▲ Organizing events designed to attract large groups of people (e.g., festivals, examinations, etc.) is allowed, provided that infection control is sufficiently implemented. However, non-urgent, one-time events should be postponed or downsized (event guidelines).

- IMS plans to **promptly respond to any false information** that provokes fear, take corrective measures, and distribute only accurate information.

## 2. Plans for the operation of facilities frequented by the public (Ministry of Health and Welfare)

- ☐ Based on the Guidelines on the Operation of Group Facilities and Facilities Frequented by Large Groups of People distributed on February 3, IMS has developed more detailed individual guidelines tailored for schools, places of business, cultural/sports facilities, etc., managed by different ministries.
- In general, the individual guidelines for these facilities contain requirements to temporarily excuse employees/users with a history of travel to China within the past 14 days from work/use, establish an emergency contact network, comply with the code of conduct for hygiene, and step up infection control by installing clinical thermometers and hand sanitizers.
- Social welfare facilities such as daycare centers, senior care facilities, and facilities for those with disabilities should temporarily shut down if any occupants or visitors are identified as confirmed cases or contacts. Public-sector care facilities should be equipped with infection control systems suited for different vulnerable groups, from children to seniors and people with disabilities, such as temporarily excusing employees who have returned from China from work.

- Schools of all levels should require students and school personnel who have returned from China in the past 14 days to put themselves under isolation by using information about travelers from China. They are also allowed to reschedule their academic affairs timeline or postpone the opening of a new semester if deemed necessary.
- IMS plans to actively promote the options of taking family-care leave or opting for reduced work hours for child care if daycare centers, schools, etc., are closed.
- \* (Family-care leave) (Unpaid) leave for up to 10 days allowed for contingencies requiring an employee to look after a child at home  
(Reduced work hours for child care) Workers with a child in the second grade or younger allowed to reduce daily work hours by 5 hours at maximum (wages partially provided)
- These guidelines require the reinforcement of physical checkups and fever tests for foreign workers during employment education before and after entry to ensure their extensive infection control.
- Inbound travelers from China are recommended to stay away from entertainment/cultural/sports facilities such as concert halls and theaters for 14 days from entry. Also, these facilities are advised to install hand sanitizers at major contact points and sterilize articles used by visitors.

### 3. Third evacuation operation for returning Korean citizens in Wuhan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- ☐ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that a third round of evacuation for Korean citizens in Wuhan has been decided following the first two rounds of evacuation of 701 Korean citizens from the epicenter



of the virus outbreak through chartered flights at the end of January.

- The evacuation flight **will leave for Wuhan as soon as possible** after discussions with the Chinese authority are concluded.
- The Chinese government originally disapproved Chinese nationals who are family members of Korean citizens boarding the evacuation flight. However, it recently changed its stance and is allowing their children and spouses and the parents of their spouses to be evacuated.
- As such, **the Korean Consulate General in Wuhan conducted a preliminary demand survey targeting the remaining Korean citizens in Wuhan and nearby regions who gave up on boarding the first and second evacuation flights and their family members with Chinese nationality.** Based on the outcome of the survey, it was decided to proceed with a third evacuation operation.
- The third round of evacuation represents **the Korean government's determination to faithfully fulfill its basic responsibility of protecting overseas Koreans.**
- The government announced that a **stringent quarantine** will be conducted to thoroughly eliminate the possibility of the entry of the virus as with the previous evacuations. The Korean citizens and their family members evacuated in the third round will be **protected in a safe location for 14 days** to resolve the concerns of the public.
- The government announced that, **although the location of the government-run protection facility has yet to be determined,** multiple candidate locations at a safe distance from residential areas are being reviewed and the final selection will be revealed shortly **after consulting candidate regions.**

#### 4. Developments and achievements

- Head of IMS Park Neung-hoo stressed, “The government has remained dedicated to taking all-out measures in an integrated manner against the entry and spread of Novel Coronavirus within the community. **The public does not need to be overly worried. Please follow the code of conduct and guidelines for infection prevention distributed by KCDC.**”
- According to Park, the government held a meeting presided over by the Prime Minister on February 2 and **established IMS immediately after** the nation’s infectious disease alert level was raised from "yellow" to "orange" on January 27.
  - Park said that the government has been **maintaining a tight surveillance network** by denying entry of all foreigners with a history of visiting or staying in Hubei in the previous 14 days since 00:00 on February 4 and activating the special immigration procedures to check for any signs of illness and confirm the contact information of **32,205 travelers from China.**
  - Park added that measures to block the spread of the virus within the community through early detection and isolation have been implemented, such as **the expansion of screening clinics** (288 on January 28 → 556 on February 7), **permission of emergency use of diagnostic test agents** (February 4), **expansion of diagnostic tests** (about 200 → about 3,000 per day), **provision of the entire amount of diagnostic testing expenses** (February 7), and **provision of living expenses and paid leave to those under self-isolation** (scheduled for February 17).
- Park also **promised that the government will continue to focus all its resources** on developing both corresponding and preemptive measures to block the spread of the virus within the community in close association with local governments and the private sector.