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Extending Intensive "Social Distancing" for Another 2 Weeks

- Inevitable to continue an intensive social distancing campaign amid still dire situation -
- Regular Briefing of Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters on COVID-19 -

☐ The Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters held a meeting today presided over by Head Chung Sekyun (Prime Minister) along with the central government and 17 cities and provinces to discuss the ▲future direction for the enhanced social distancing, and ▲progress of financial support for SMEs and small businesses, etc. at a video conference room in Government Complex Seoul.

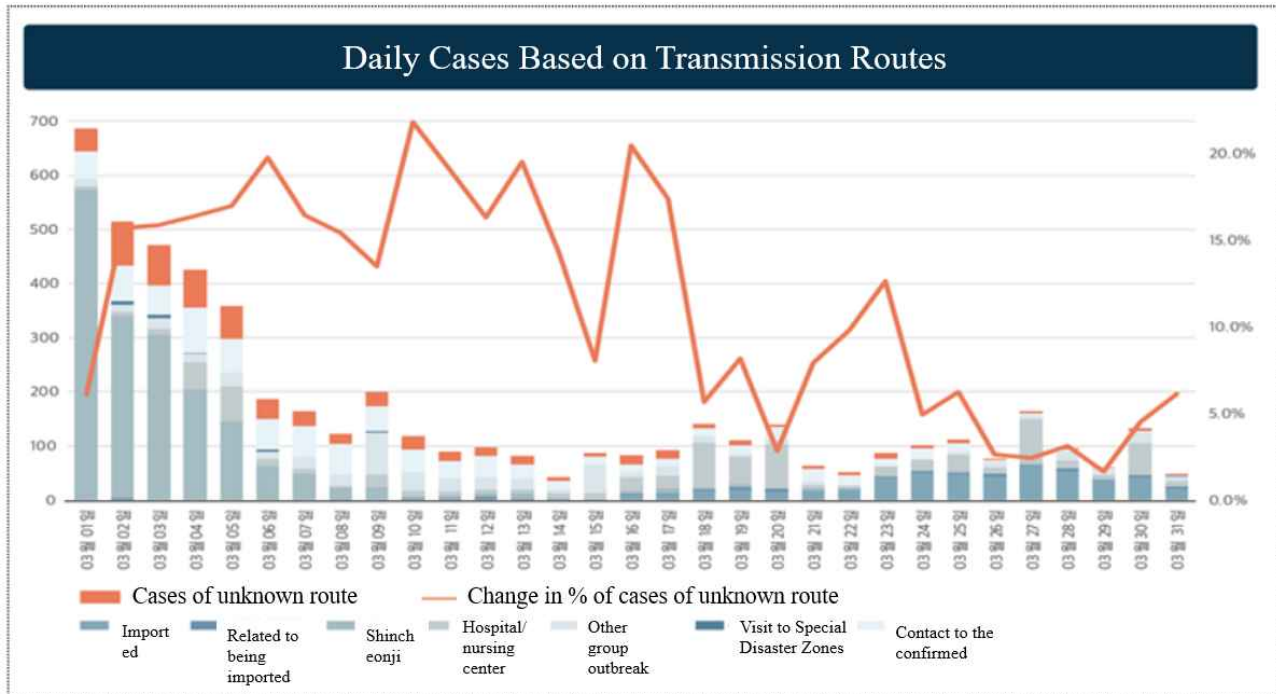
☐ Head Chung stressed, at the meeting, that we should reset our mindsets and collect our power and wisdom together to cautiously respond to continuous cases imported from abroad, and upcoming school opening with online classes on April 9.

○ He also asked the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport to carefully manage the quarantine process of overseas entrants in advance to prevent overloading.

- In the course of preparing for online school opening, the relevant agencies were advised to make efforts **to solve the existing digital divide** and **strengthen the information literacy of the public**.
- He also said that although the **financial assistance for small business owners** becomes better than before, **more efforts are still needed**, urging each local government **to speed up** the supporting process.
- Meanwhile, he directed the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters **to provide statistics needed by the people in advance** rather than **following the existing statistics categories**, adding that we **should keep thinking which statistics need to be provided** to facilitate **good communication** with the public.
- ☐ The Prime Minister announced that the **"enhanced social distancing"** scheduled to be implemented for 15 days from March 22 **continues for another 2 weeks until April 19**.

【Evaluation of Social Distancing】

- ☐ The social distancing **was confirmed to be effective in blocking the spread of infections** without drastic measures to close businesses or limit the movement thanks to the active participation of the Korean people in the campaign while willingly sacrificing their daily lives amid difficult situation.
- As a result of the social distancing, **the number and percentage of confirmed persons of unknown transmission route dropped from 37 cases (19.8%) on March 6 to 3 cases (6.1%) on March 31**.



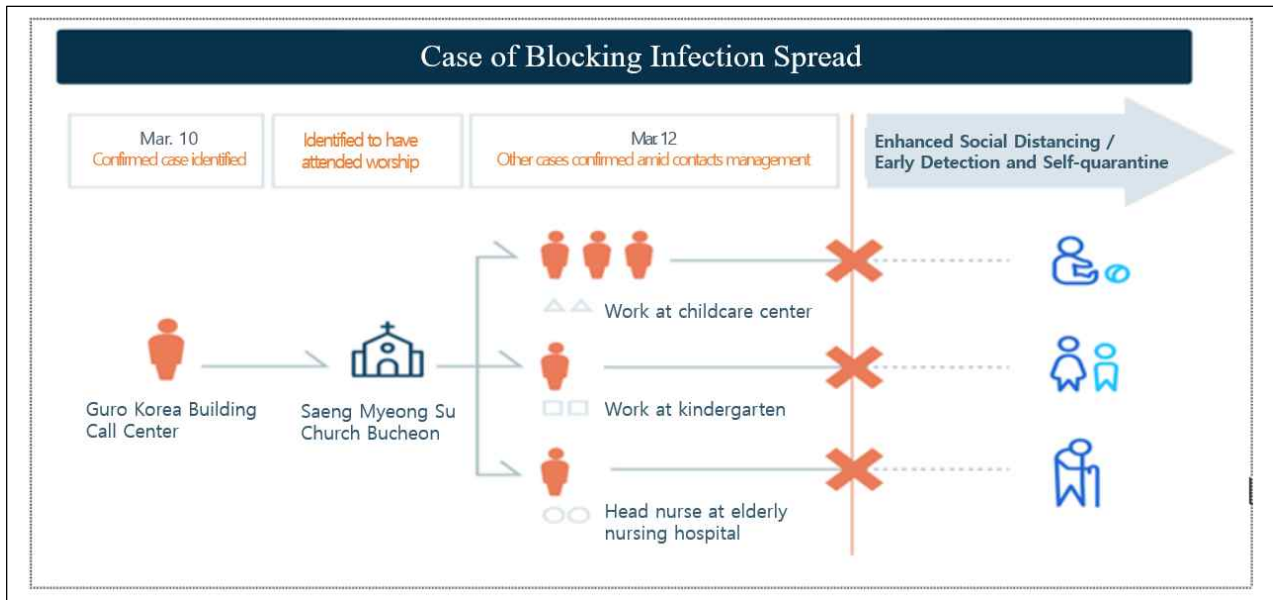
- In addition, cases have been identified where infections which might spread to large-scale group transmissions were controlled in a small scale.

< Case of Manmin Central Church in Guro >

- In the case of the Manmin Central Church in Guro where a total of 45 confirmed persons were found, infection took place between participants in a pre-meeting organized to prepare for online worship. However, it didn't hold offline worship which 4,000 to 5,000 participants usually attend and changed it to online one, preventing mass transmission from taking place.

< Case of Guro Call Center >

- Two of the church members who attended the worship together with a confirmed case working at the call center in Guro work at a childcare center and a hospital specialized in the elderly care, but both center and hospital were closed, which prevented further transmission to facility users.



< Comparison of the number of new group transmission
"before and after the enhanced social distancing" >

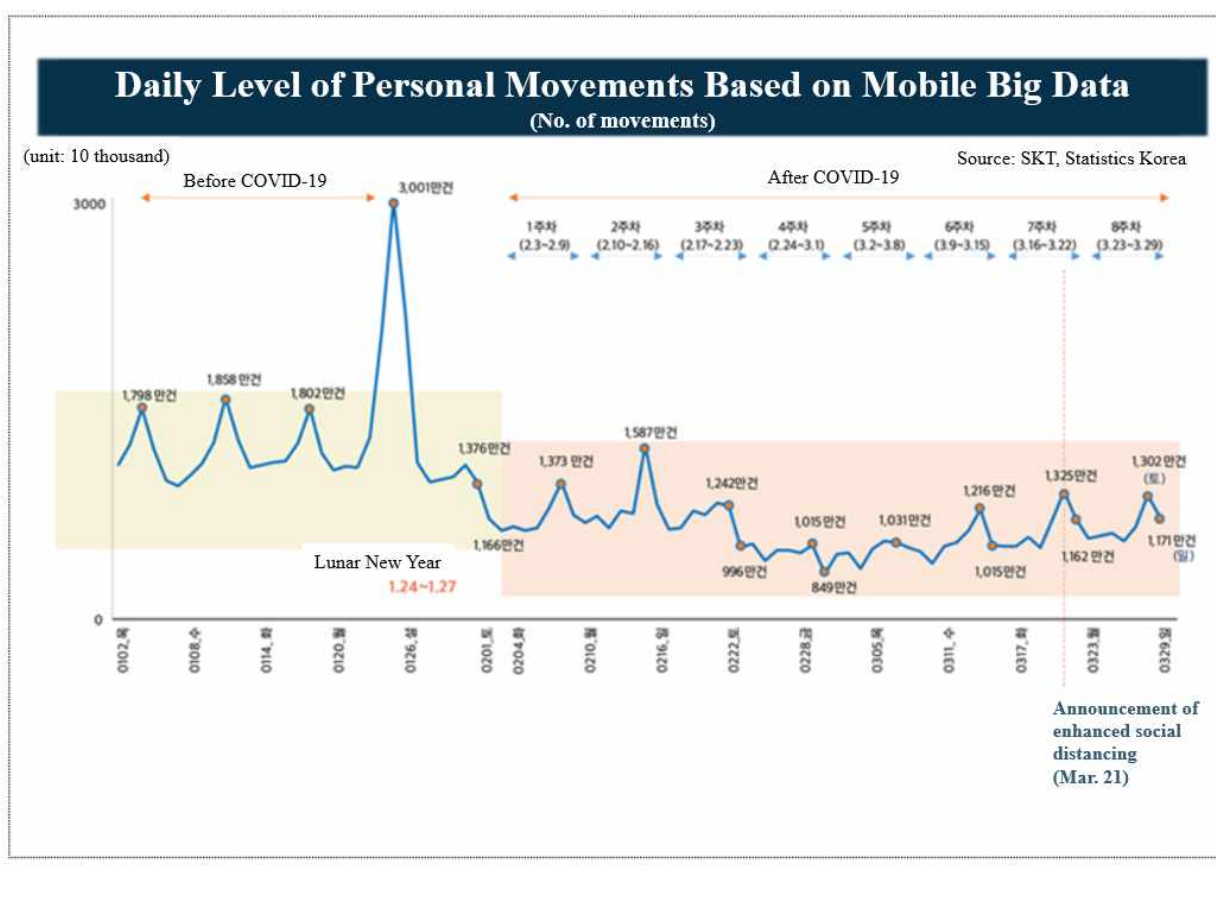
Before											After										
Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21	Tot al	Tot al	Mar 22	Mar 23	Mar 24	Mar 25	Mar 26	Mar 27	Mar 28	Mar 29	Mar 30	Mar 31
1	1		1		4	2	2			11	4			1	1	1		1			

* The number of new group transmissions, which was 11 cases for 10 days before the campaign, decreased to 4 cases for the same period after the drive (△ 63.6%)

- ☐ However, it seems that **many people are increasingly getting tired** of the drive due to the longer period of social distancing.
- ☐ It was shown that **after the infection cases in the Shincheonji Church, the level of personal movement markedly decreased**, which was maintained, but the level **has slightly increased, recently**.

< Analyzing the level of personal movements (source: SKT · Statistics Korea) >

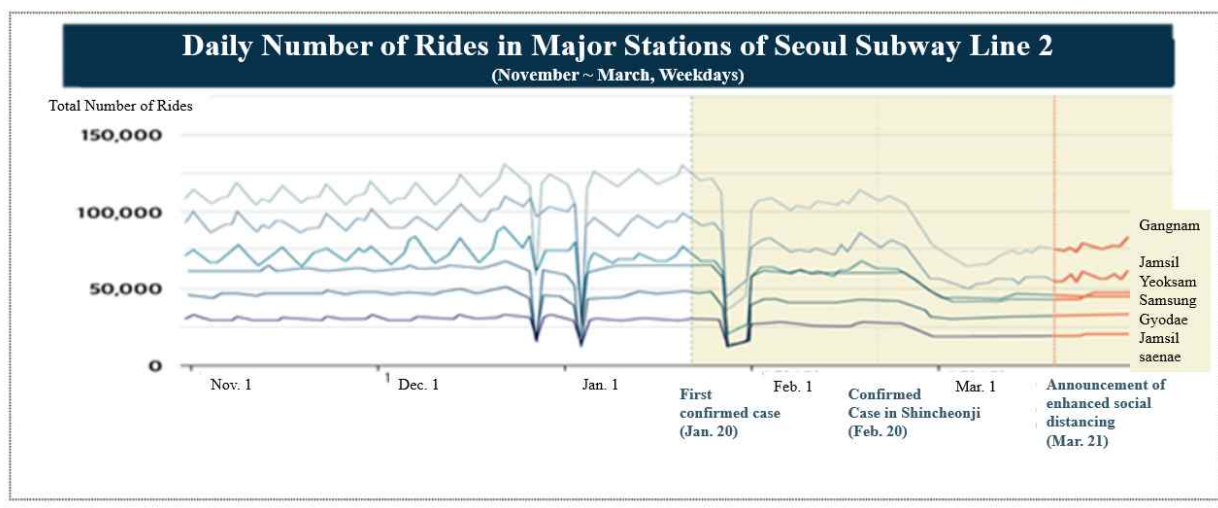
- According to the movement analysis based on the SKT data, movement of the public decreased by 38.1%, the lowest level, in the 4th week of COVID-19 outbreak (Feb. 24 ~ Mar. 1) compared to the days before a confirmed COVID-19 case was identified (Jan. 9 ~ 22). After recording the lowest, it has gradually increased to record 28.1% drop in the 8th week (Mar. 23 ~ 29) compared to the days before the outbreak or 16.1% increase compared to the lowest point recorded.



< Analysis of the number of subway rides >

- The daily number of passengers at major stations in Seoul Subway Line 2, such as Gangnam Station and Jamsil Station, has been gradually increasing after the number sharply dropped from February 20 to 29 when group transmission took place at Shincheonji Church.

* (Number of rides at Gangnam Station) Appr. 130,000 persons before outbreak → appr. 120,000 (Feb. 1~19) → appr. 60,000 (Feb. 20~29) → appr. 7,000 ~ 8,000 (Feb. 29~)



【Why it is inevitable to extend for 2 weeks】

- However, the government decided that the current situation is still dire and **explained that it is inevitable to further extend the stronger social distancing.**

- First, **COVID-19 is still a pandemic where the number of the newly confirmed and deaths are rapidly growing across the globe**, and there is still insufficient information on the characteristics of COVID-19, its virus infectivity, transmission routes, immunity, and etc.

* On April 2 alone, **the US saw 27,107 confirmed cases and 947 deaths**, and **Spain 7,719 confirmed cases and 864 deaths in a single day.**

- In addition, **group infection still emerges in Korea and its number of new confirmed patients per day is stagnant at around 100 and not reduced.**

* (Number of new confirmed cases) 152 (Mar. 19) → 64 (Mar. 23) → 146 (Mar.28) → 101 (Apr. 1) → 86 (Apr. 3)

- Also, it needs to be monitored if overseas entrants entering before April 1, when 14-day self-quarantine for all arrivals was yet mandated, affect community infection at a time when the number of cases imported from abroad has been recently on the rise.
- In order to **block the spread of community infections**, it is necessary to **reduce the number of cases of unknown route as much as possible** where the infection prevention and control capacity can not be reached.

【Extension measures for another 2 weeks】

- ☐ Accordingly, the Minister of Health and Welfare further extends the existing suspension of operating some facilities and businesses including churches which have high risk of infection for 2 more weeks until April 19.
- **Operation is continuously suspended of △religious facilities, △some types of indoor sports facilities** (dancing halls, martial arts training centers, physical education centers), **△entertainment facilities** (cola-techs, clubs, entertainment bars, etc.), and **△other facilities designated by heads of local governments** (internet cafes, karaoke rooms, private academies, etc.).

- It is guided again that even if it is inevitable to operate the businesses, the guidelines (Annex 1) provided by the quarantine authorities should be followed.
- In addition to this, **the group-based infection prevention and control mechanism is to be established** targeting nursing hospitals, mental hospitals, churches, and others **to detect patients in the early stage to prevent infection from spreading.**
- Also, a **manager responsible for infection prevention and control is designated** in a group/community with duties to regularly check if there is any case displaying symptoms in a group and report to the quarantine authorities in case of an outbreak.
- When a report is received, the quarantine authorities will check the risk and take measures in an early stage through diagnostic tests.
- In addition, the authorities plan to **strengthen the management of those imported from abroad by enhancing the effectiveness of self-quarantine** such as mandatory installation of the safety protection app, real-time management of people out of reach through the GIS-integrated situation board (early April), and resident reporting system, to name a few.
- The government aims to **curb the new cases to below 50 a day** through the strengthened social distancing that **the nation's healthcare system can routinely handle without much difficulty.**

- They also **suggested an objective to minimize cases of unknown infection routes by strengthening the control of the quarantine network.**

- The Vice head 1 Park Neunghoo of the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters (Minister of Health and Welfare) **expressed his gratitude** to the public, saying, **“The recent domestic infections are managed at a certain level thanks to the public who actively cooperated for the enhanced social distancing”.**

- He also added that, **"We ask for your kind understanding that it is inevitable to maintain the stronger social distancing for some time and request to keep maintaining healthy distance, even though it is hard, for all of us".**