



The Chartered  
Institute of Logistics  
and Transport



Women in Logistics  
and Transport

## **WILAT CHAT ON COVID-19: Coping strategies for the home bound**

**Thursday, 2 April 2020**

The second WiLAT chat series on COVID-19 was attended by 12 CILT/WiLAT members: Dato Radzek Malek, CILT International President, Keith Newton, Secretary General, Dorothy Chan, WiLAT Global Chairperson, Vicky Koo, WiLAT Deputy Global Chairperson, Reshma Yousuf, Chair of session, Gayani de Alwis, Gayathri Karunanayaka, Kelly Lee, Li Tong, Nasreen Hague, Nazeema Seelarboku and Zawiah Abdul Majid.

As news on the spread of COVID-19 develop, there is grave concern that there will be more locking down of cities and increasingly tighter social distancing measures. A sharing of the video produced in Japan shows that the virus could stay in the air in small particles before dropping to the ground or attached to surfaces. Hence, wearing face masks and cleaning of hands after touching objects could help to minimize the chance of infection.

In the storm of infection and death sweeping through cities, some cities may find it necessary to lock down to reduce contacts and cross infection. In addition to strict infection-control measures, this move will reduce the pressure on the medical system where hospitals could be running out of beds and ventilators.

However, this could have a serious impact on business and more importantly how to maintain essential supplies of necessities to households that cannot go outside their homes. WiLATs are learning from each other and understand that for cities under lock-down, on-line purchase and delivery have become an important resource. With restriction on within city movements, there is a grave impact on transport of commodities for local consumption and this requires strong government intervention and co-ordination centrally to provide food and supplies.

Essential workers, however, are allowed to work, including those in important industries and also farms which form an important part of the food chain. It is important to be able to establish a safe and hassle-free transport corridor to allow the transport of food and medical supplies to the right place and at the right time. Our supply chain professionals could contribute to this by formulating delivery strategies and effective stock taking mechanism. How technology could help will be the focus of WiLAT in third chat session.

### **Social distancing**

For cities which have not imposed lock-down, there are strict social distancing measures. Some measures could be effective to achieve containment such as closure of schools, government offices, restaurants, cinemas etc. There is more work from home, voluntary stay at home, cancellation of mass gathering and improve personal hygiene.

A new style of life has emerged. General public reaction during the initial period is to avoid crowded places, use face masks, wash hands more often, avoid touching common objects, check



out for symptoms and cutting down of social activities. Lately, meals delivery is preferred over eat outs.

COVID-19 patients may not display symptoms until 5-6 days. Containment also means being able to test infected cases early and isolate the patients and their close contacts and put them under quarantine. The aim of containment is drive the number of infected cases to zero ultimately and the ability to administer COVID-19 test timely is instrumental to containing the spread of cases within the community.

### **Community preparedness**

The community must work hand-in-hand to prevent the spread of the virus. Both Singapore and Hong Kong have shown a rise in the number of cases at around end March from people returning overseas. To adapt to the situation, enhanced social distancing measures have been put in place and this requires discipline and community awareness of the roles they play in protecting our health service and our health care workers.

In Pakistan, there are scenes of generosity to offer food to Pakistanis as many people on the street have no shelter and are daily wage earners. City lock-down will mean no money and no food and while on one hand, the country is combating COVID-19, there is also grave concern on poverty. So Pakistanis are bounding together to assist the less fortunate. The coronavirus is revealing the world's culture and how different communities interact with government decisions in the battle against the virus. When we are having a quiet period at home, we should pause and think how we can help and care for each other.

### **Words from CILT**

We need early decisions-making on escalation of measures to match the threats of coronavirus. This is very demanding on our leaders also on our community. Dato Radzek, our International President during this unprecedented period advised all CILTs to stand together to face the invisible enemy and to remain steadfast all the time. The Institute would take the opportunity to study and research the new supply chain and new mobility platform that have emerged.

Our Secretary General also gave us the good news that there would be more use of webinar platforms for meetings and sharing of information. CILT COVID-19 Bulletin has also been launched as part of our global best practice resource to help to think about and to determine appropriate response locally.

CILT family is happy to note that situation in China has stabilized and Wuhan would be re-opened on 8 April 2020. The city has since been under strict control on movements and people subject to home-stay for a long time.

Equally of concern is our CILTs in Africa and we hope that the various exchanges which are going on will help them to be more prepared and to join hands with us to combat the virus.



## Concluding remarks

WiLAT has been taking an active role in supporting the community and in promoting CILT to female members. This has not stopped but has taken a new form through on-line meetings and discussions. We would not hesitate to share and to support each other and we are grateful to Li Tong, WiLAT China for offering to secure face masks and medical supplies for us. She has also launched a one-minute video campaign to encourage those affected by COVID 19. All WiLATs are welcome to submit a video before end of April.

Join us for the next WiLAT chat session on 9 April on the topic of “Technology enables social distancing”.

Before closing, listen to Bee Gees with soothing Lyrics to remind us to wash hands and stay inside. We hope to be able to meet face to face soon.

Dorothy Chan  
WiLAT Global Chairperson

### Please join our next session:

WiLAT Chat on COVID19: technology enables social distancing

Thu, Apr 9, 2020 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM (Hong Kong time)

Please join from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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