



WILAT CHAT ON COVID-19: Post COVID-19 - Passenger Transport for a safe return Thursday, 21 May 2020

WiLAT chat was held on 21st May after a break of two weeks due to WiLAT Steering Committee meeting and CILT IMC meeting. After months of effort, some countries can now start to prepare for reopen after a complete lockdown for several months. Since the high transmissibility of COVID-19, the reopen progress and how to prevent the virus outbreak again after reopening are big concern. And this chat session of WiLAT focused on Passenger Transport for a safe return. Our guest speaker on this topic is Mr J.M. Thilakarathna Banda, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Transport Service Management Sri Lanka, on the normalizing of transport operation in Sri Lanka; Ms. Carmen Li, Global Vice Chairperson of WiLAT East Asia and General Manager of High speed Rail & Intercity, MTR Corporation, and Ms. Cheris Lee, Chief of High Speed Rail & Intercity, MTR Corporation on how to protect the employees and passenger of public transport for a safe return.

There was an overwhelming number of 20 participants from different Territories. Attending the session includes: Dorothy Chan, WiLAT Global Chairperson (part only), Vicky Koo, WiLAT Deputy Global Chairperson, Cham, Edward Lau, Finbarr Clearly, Gayani de Alwis, Gayathri, Kelly Lee, Indeewari Chandrasekara, Hasini Lakdharani, Michael Ginap, Renuka Rathnayaka, Dhashma, Mahaweli, Amali Mendis, Philippa Greenwood, Chaminda PUNCHIBANDARA, Mumeka Walumweya, Ruanthi, Vijaya Amaratunga, Habarskada Niranga Liyanage.

Normalizing for Post COVID19 in Sri Lanka

As COVID-19 was under control in several regions, cities that been locked down for months are now be questioning how to arrange a safe return.

The normalizing methodology applied in Sri Lanka consists of: Planning, Regulation, Implementation and Enforcement.

Sri Lanka has planned for a stage-wise resumption of passenger transport operation in the country. To gradually restore travel and work and keeping the health and safety of the people as top priority while recognizing their livelihoods are equally important. Eliminating the possibility of spreading deadly virus through transport services is a key factor until the eradication of the virus from the country.

The first step for normalizing is to decide the stages of operation with the health authorities. Sri Lanka has divided the operation into 4 different stages. Currently, Sri Lanka is performing under Stage One, within district only. After review, the operation will go to the next stage, within province, and then expanded to between 2 provinces after review and lastly among multiple provinces.

Stage One is still ongoing in Sri Lanka as curfew is enforced in specific districts and Red Zones or Districts with High Risk Zones categorized by Health Authorities exist. Transport demand decreased as Government entities and private establishments are operated with limited number not exceeding 30% of the total no. of employees and only selective economic activities are allowed. Supporting bus operation is only provided for employees of Public and Private Sector within districts and commuters are encouraged to use private vehicles to reach their workplaces.

When there are no more districts that was under curfew and Red Zones or Districts with High Risk Zones categorized by Health Authorities within province, after review, Sri Lanka will transit to Stage Two to



permit travel within province. The transport demand will be determined based on the percentage of resumption of Government entities and private establishments and whether more economic activities will be allowed. Support bus operation only for employees of Public and Private Sector can be expanded to within Province, the rest of the transport operation in Stage One will remain in Stage Two.

When more provinces get into Stage Two, Sri Lanka will start to review and apply Stage Three in selected provinces which have no curfew enforcement and red zones. Public transportation will be reopened to normal passengers with restrictions and the support bus operation will go between selected provinces. Registered passengers as employees transported by Railway with expanded operation to national level.

When all provinces run at Stage Three, and all economic activities are allowed, Sri Lanka will seek to spread out the peak hour peak demand and some transport demand management strategies such as flexible work hours, home office, will be introduced. To ensure establishment of a new culture of public transportation several measures in line with health guidelines will be introduced and initiatives will be taken to establish people centric public transport services through supply and demand management strategies for the transport sector.

Based on the current Stage One operation, Sri Lanka government will estimate transport demand. The estimate will be carried out base on numbers of motorized trips and by trip purpose. Sri Lanka assume that there will be 30% work trips in the current stage with planned peak period for 3 hours. The government will review the level of occupancy allowed when planning operation strategy. To review supply needed based on demand, type of operator used and the details of coverage by each operator at the current stage. After review, the government will publish the Operation Guidelines and regulations related to COVID Operations.

Clear information to the public from different methods are important when the guidelines and regulation are published, and the government will collect feedback from public and the operators by survey to update the operation plans. Will also need to determine the penalty for violations to make sure that operators obey the regulations.

Progressing from one stage to another will need an update on health conditions and the need of economic activities. After review, Sri Lanka will start to plan for the next stage.

Safe Returns – the Hong Kong and China Intercity perspective

Local transport was on-going but cross boundary was suspended in Hong Kong. Public awareness is high and HK public is wearing masks although it is not compulsory. The MTR applied bacterial coating on surface that is frequently touched by passengers; and clean the surface regularly. The masks supply was limited in early February. PPE stock becomes strategic for better protection on the employees.

MTR provide PPE/masks and sanitizers for their employees at front line/back office areas and vehicle of conveyance to protect their employees. Also reminding their employees have self-protection when interacting with customers. Also, MTR keeps monitoring the employees' temperature and travel record to create a safe working area to protect employees. MTR employees are grouped under a strict shift system which allows easy tracking so that employees could be identified when one of them are infected Normal services will be maintained by the other two teams.



The Chartered
Institute of Logistics
and Transport



Women in Logistics
and Transport

To prevent infection, there will be temperature check in the High-Speed Railway stations and reminders to put on face masks. MTR also apply nano coating and disinfection gel on surface to prevent transmission. MTR done some health promotion online, on station and conveyance, to educate and communicate along customer journey. At the beginning, the High-speed railway reserved alternate rows of seats for keeping distance between passengers. After the COVID-19 are under control in China, High-speed railway now reserved about 20 seats in a dedicated carriage for quarantine.

MTR will determine the lead time for re-opening with the government. Phased approach will be applied for re-opening for prudence and to commensurate with demand. Bubble Strategy will be considered of which the low risk province / region are bubbles for service resumption. The re-opening progress can be arranged between clean bubbles.

Concluding remarks

It is expected that both Sri Lanka and Hong Kong would resume normal business in phases. Experience suggests that personal protection and staying vigilant over personal hygiene are very important. Some of the questions that we would be asking from a passenger transport point of view are:

- a) would there be easing of the peak travel demand in the future when new work pattern emerges;
- b) assuming that the virus will stay for a while, how we can help our public transport users to remain alert on hygiene measures;
- c) can innovation and technology help in a post coronavirus urban environment;
- d) how swiftly we can respond to future crisis.

Join us for the next WiLAT chat session on 28th May on the topic of “Post COVID-19: Reopening of airport”. We will have experts in the industry to share in this session.

Vicky Koo
WiLAT Deputy Global Chairperson



The Chartered
Institute of Logistics
and Transport



Women in Logistics
and Transport

Please join our next session:

WiLAT Chat on COVID19: Post CONVID-19: Reopening of airport
Thu, May 28, 2020 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM (Hong Kong time)

Please join from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/633307413>

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/633307413>

The screenshot displays the GoToMeeting application interface. At the top, it shows the GoToMeeting logo, a 'REC' indicator, and window controls. The main area is a grid of 20 video thumbnails, each with a name in a circle: VK, FC, MW, MG, IC, CP, HL, C, RR, M2, HNL, AM, D, G, and KL. Most thumbnails have a red mute icon. The top-right corner shows 'View Everyone' and a participant count of 19. On the right side, there is a 'PEOPLE' sidebar with 19/151 participants. It includes 'Mute All' and 'Unmute All' buttons, a list of names (Chaminda Punchibandara, DELL, Edward LAU, Finbarr Cleary, Gayani de Alwis, Gayathri, Habarskada Niranga Liyana..., Hasini Lakdharani, Indeewari Chandrasekara, Kelly Lee), and a 'MEETING ID: 633-307-413'. Below the list are buttons for 'Copy Meeting Link' and 'Invite', and a 'Meeting is unlocked' toggle switch.