Message from the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) regarding COVID-19

Dear Industry Colleagues,

Whilst the number of reported cases of COVID-19 is stabilising in Macao I would like to give you an update on the measures the Macao SAR Government and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) have and are taking in response to the outbreak.

Government Response
On January 5, the Macao SAR Government established a cross-departmental team to tackle the expected emergence of the coronavirus in Macao. On January 21, the government set up a coordination center to fight the epidemic, which remains active to this day. A number of measures have been taken to halt the spread of the virus:
- Stepping up health checks and border controls to stem cross border traffic to and from Mainland China.
- Suspension of non-emergency public services
- Managing distribution of facial masks to ensure citizens have access at cost price.
- Closing of casinos for a 15-day period, and re-opened on 20 February 2020.
- Cancellation of all annual Lunar New Year celebrations to limit human-to-human transmission of the disease in crowded areas.

The outcome of these measures is that no additional cases have been identified since 4 February with a total of 10 cases and 6 of these cases have recovered and have been discharged.

Communication
The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has set up a 24-hour hotline (Tel: +853 6210-6655) to provide instant inquiry services and assistance to the convention and exhibition industry, event organisers and MICE visitors. Further advice for the convention and exhibition industry can be found here.

The Health Bureau of the Government of Macao SAR provides latest updates through the dedicated website against epidemics on the number of cases, latest news, prevention guidelines and related links, the website can be accessed here.

Recovery
Whilst there are indications that measures that have been taken have curbed the spread of the disease in Macao with no new reported cases since 4 February 2020, measures are being taken to assess the impact and speed up recovery efforts. Whereas the number of cases in Macao has stabilised, this does not mean that the critical phase of the epidemic has passed. The Macao SAR Government will continue to take all measures to stop the spread of the virus in the local community.

The Macao SAR Government has announced measures to support businesses and residents. The programme includes five main areas including reduction of taxes and
fees to reduce the burden on businesses and residents, promotion of assistance and interest subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises, in order to support their survival, by strengthening measures to support vulnerable families, improving training to secure employment and issuing electronic consumer coupons to encourage and accelerate the economy.

While the city is fighting against epidemic, IPIM takes the initiative to collect information of how Macao MICE industry operates. Aside from the meetings with the MICE industry held on January 24, February 4 and February 18 to reinforce communication and organising instant message groups with the sector, IPIM released advice to the sector on novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention, which include coordination, management, environmental hygiene. IPIM also called on Macao MICE sector, event organisers and MICE delegates to implement prevention measures.

IPIM has launched a survey to assess the effect of the Covid-19 outbreak in the meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions (MICE) industry. The IPIM survey will assess various impacts on the industry, from how many events have been cancelled to the estimated reduction in revenue derived from cancelled and postponed events. The survey is also seeking to collect profit forecasts for the first half of 2020 which take into account the epidemic’s impact on the economy.

IPIM will continue to attentively listen to the voice of the local sector and react in a timely manner, study and design feasible measures that meet the society’s actual needs. IPIM will also stand with the industry to get over all the difficulties and cherish the progress that took the effort of the entire MICE industry of Macao, and maintain the steady growth of the industry and nurture the sustainable and diversified development of the city’s economy.

On behalf of the entire MICE industry in Macao I would like to thank our international colleagues for their messages of support and encouragement during these testing times. We will continue to monitor and inform the public on the latest developments and are confident that in these times of disruption the resilience of the international MICE industry in providing vital platforms for people to meet, trade and collaborate will prevail.

Yours sincerely,

Irene Va Kuan Lau
President
Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM)