The spread of COVID-19 across 160+ countries, has generated an ever rising, approximate number of 414,179 confirmed cases and over 18,000+ reported deaths. Many countries have thus imposed travel bans, nationwide lockdowns and strict quarantine measures to curb the rapid escalation. Identified as a global pandemic, the virus has invariably led to a global economic and financial crisis.

**Novel Corona Virus A.K.A COVID – 19**

**A Global Pandemic**

**Situation in Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total (new) confirmed cases</th>
<th>Total (new) deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globally</td>
<td>634,835 (63,159)</td>
<td>29,891 (3,998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Pacific Region</td>
<td>102,803 (1,343)</td>
<td>362 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Region</td>
<td>361,031 (36,688)</td>
<td>21,427 (2,687)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East Asia Region</td>
<td>3709 (624)</td>
<td>139 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean Region</td>
<td>42,777 (3846)</td>
<td>2668 (160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of the Americas</td>
<td>120,798 (20,484)</td>
<td>1973 (486)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Region</td>
<td>3005 (174)</td>
<td>51 (04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO Risk Assessment**

- Global Level: Very High

---

*Extract from the Situation Report launched by World Health Organization on 29th March 2020*

*Situation Report of Sri Lanka as at 30th March 2020 issued by the epidemiology Unit & Health Promotion Bureau*
The 2019-20 Coronavirus pandemic outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China in December 2019. With rapid spread of the virus in China, the resources needed to contain the virus became limited and then scarce. A-PAD Japan immediately sent out a response team to China along with medical masks to be provided to frontline health workers and also communities.

A vital preventive equipment of face masks going out of stock nationwide in China, A-PAD Sri Lanka was approached through its partner member HSBC in Sri Lanka to immediately intervene support. The need was to export the masks from Sri Lanka to Wuhan directly. A-PAD SL team partnered with a local distributor of the specific mask and arranged for local purchasing and thereon partnered with Aitken Spence Cargo, in carrying out the freight services as other local and international carriers had halted services to Wuhan.

Led and coordinated by HSBC Sri Lanka & Hongkong as well as Hongkong Red Cross, the items were successfully handed over to Wuhan for immediate distribution.

2240 N95 3M branded masks were exported Wuhan, China
A-PAD Board Emergency Meeting on Regional Partnerships in Fighting the Pandemic

An emergency board meeting was called for by A-PAD regional members in order to call for immediate action to contain the Corona virus and also respond to proactively than the current trend of being reactive. In doing so, the member country heads unveiled the current situations of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan and Korea, stating the need for cross-boundary good practices to be shared for better preparedness. A-PAD Japan was one of the first platforms in supporting China after the outbreak. It provided tons of medical items to China. As a gesture of goodwill, China which is recovering very fast, is now reciprocating Japan. The regional platforms have vouched for communicating and practicing best practices from each country and also responsively move towards a collective measure of containing the pandemic in the Asia Pacific.

A-PAD Bulletin

DMC sets up COVID-19 Emergency Call Centre

Following the rapid outbreak of the global pandemic in Sri Lanka, a streamlined effort to handle the general public, foreign nationals and officials was in great need. DMC call centre (117) was transformed to a 24-hour emergency COVID-19 call centre immediately on the directive of the Director General, DMC. The 25 emergency line call center is manned by both DMC emergency call operators as well as volunteer medical students who provide medical advice and response to callers. In support of enhancing infrastructural requirements of the call center, A-PAD Sri Lanka provided support in order for the functioning to take place efficiently.
The spread of COVID’19 in Sri Lanka saw a turning point in Sri Lanka when the number of inland transmitting patients saw a rapid increase within the first week of March 2020, due to the lack of self-awareness / resources available at hand. Masses of Sri Lankans were complacent in the eyes of the virus, therefore exposing themselves to the threat which is highly contagious. Taking upon itself to contain this spread of this virus, A-PAD Sri Lanka engaged in a nation-wide social media campaign amongst businesses and general public in safety measures that can be practiced by themselves.

The information collation took place in sectorized form to prevent duplication and therefore were presented in infographic, poster, video formats applicable to both children and adults. Personal preventive measures, business tips for continuation, curfew regulations, stockpiling tips and global warning by trusted sources were shared with a wide-spread audience both locally and internationally.

#StopTheSpread – Community Awareness Campaign to Contain Spread of Corona Virus

A-PAD Sri Lanka’s special campaigns can be found and shared at:
Facebook -  https://www.facebook.com/apad.lk/
Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/apadsrilanka/?fbclid=IwAR0tv2l_clRSpzJyWR_au5ghSqc3fwyF8nUcvdKp1TMpraELd8YWsnjZh6k
Twitter - https://twitter.com/apadlk

CÔUGH and SNEEZE into your SLEEVE

STAND TOGETHER by not STANDING TOGETHER #StopTheSpread
The Government of Sri Lanka imposed curfews in a few districts prone vulnerable to the global pandemic. Following this decision by the government, the general public started panic purchasing at all retail supermarkets as well as elf-made boutiques island-wide, causing chaos amidst the rapid spread of the virus. In addressing this issue, A-PAD Sri Lanka worked in partnership with supermarket chains in introducing guidelines for purchasing when curfew is lifted. These guidelines were launched in order to reduce community transmission of the virus as well as sensitizing among the public the culture of responsible purchasing power. In doing so, A-PAD Sri Lanka engaged in an island-wide social media campaign name, “Supermarket Decorum”. Basic steps to personal safety such as maintaining social distance when purchasing, cladding in personal protective gear such as masks etc were included in this campaign. A-PAD Media Partner Sirasa and MTV Television and Radio Channels spearheaded the media campaign.

The social media campaign can be viewed and shared at:

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/apad.lk/
Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/apadsrilanka/?fbclid=IwAR0tv2l_cIRSpzlyWR_aw5ghsQc3fwhF8nucvdkp1TMpraElD8YWSnjZj6k
Twitter - https://twitter.com/apadlk
In light of the global pandemic Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its fast pace spread, Sri Lanka has put in place a comprehensive precautionary measure for those individuals arriving into the country. Upon arrival passengers are directed towards a doctor and Army personnel where record of their luggage count is derived, before being directed towards a temporary setup for immigration. Hereon, masks are provided and disinfectants are sprayed thoroughly to the individuals and their belongings. Following this, the passengers are given two detailed forms to be filled, a counter to exchange currency and facilities to call their family members. The passengers are then taken on a bus towards the quarantine centers that have been put up in the island. Here, two passengers are placed in one room where their temperatures are checked for the second time. The first temperature check is completed at the airport. The room is equipped with the necessary facilities such as WIFI, TV, toiletry bag, etc.

Although stepping out is prohibited, the centers have people who can be reached out to in case of any help. Every center also has doctors and ambulances ready in case of emergency. The quarantine process is in place for 14 days for every individual prior to being sent home.

Forest Fire Safety Policy Initiative - DMC

Forest, bush and grassland fires in Sri Lanka can lead to unprecedented disasters. Long periods of aridity and human induced fire are now becoming more pronounced and visible. As a pre-emptive measure the Director General (DG) of Disaster Management Centre (DMC) called an emergency meeting amongst key stakeholders, to formulate preventive guidelines. The meeting of experts determined that the causes of forest fires in Sri Lanka are either accidental or intentional. One of the main causes highlighted was, cattle owners starting a fire to stimulate new vegetation growth for their animals or the farmers burning their stubble in the field to clean it up and start a new crop. Pyromaniacs too are on the increase. The fires become out of control with dry weather and strong winds causing huge losses. DG, DMC appointed technical committee will formulate Forest Fire Disaster Management Guidelines. A-PAD will support the initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Forest Fires</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hectares destroyed</td>
<td>2887.52</td>
<td>478.95</td>
<td>1184.28</td>
<td>1068.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forest fires and acreage destroyed in Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Forest Fires from 16 Jan – 1 Mar 2020</th>
<th>Hectares Destroyed</th>
<th>Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>195.94</td>
<td>Ratnapura, Nuwaraeliya, Badulla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forest Fires for the Year 2020
In the last few decades, natural and man-made disasters have significantly impacted human lives, the social fabric, and the built environment. The hospitality industry in particular is one of the most vulnerable to hazards and disasters. It is intensely sensitive to the negative impacts of hazards such as natural disasters, clashes, conflicts and terrorist attacks.

As a year-round industry, the hospitality industry has a special vulnerability to hazards, including, the inseparability between the guests and the employees as part of the product itself. The effects of December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami which affected the hotels along the coastal line in Sri Lanka and the Easter Sunday Bombing in April 2019 targeting four high-end hotels in Colombo elevates the risk category of the hotel industry. The recurrent flooding and landslides in the past few years further exacerbates the need for hotel managers and industry leaders to establish comprehensive emergency management plans engaging different stakeholders in the sector for collaborative success.

In addressing this, Aitken Spence Hotel Management partnered with A-PAD Sri Lanka in respect of Aitken Spence Hotels located along the coast and highlands. The first phase of this series was held at Turyaa Kalutara and Heritance Kandalama hotels respectively, where pre-selected teams were guided through a practical approach in securing businesses amidst and post disasters. They key being, how better prepared are the hotels to face a calamity with minimum or no damage to infrastructure, services and overall to the business.

Teams have been appointed to draft disaster preparedness plans for each property after which the second phase will begin.

Attendants at the training session.

Mr. Firzan Hashim (A-PAD SL) conducting the training.

Participants engaging in group work activities.
A-PAD Sri Lanka in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan launched an advanced level swift water rescue training program for its existing Search and Rescue (SAR) Team as well as for new batches of both military and civil participants in Kithulgala from 29th February – 8th March 2020.

Under the supervision of Japanese and Taiwanese expert instructors from the International Rescue Instructors Association (IRIA), 50 participants from various sectors including Sri Lanka Army, Sri Lanka Navy, Sri Lanka Air Force, Special Forces, Police Special Task Force, private sector representatives and volunteer teams were trained on crisis management during water based emergencies.

During the training program, the trainees experienced various rescue operations on swift water including bay rescue, boat capsize, Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) maintenance, night training, swift water drifting, throw bag rescue and drift current rescue.

With the training site moving to Mount Lavinia on the final day, the entire team which comprised of both Level 01 and Level 02 members received the exclusive opportunity of experiencing rescue operations at sea. The international experts briefed the participants on all necessary precautions before launching out to sea while maneuvering Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRBs) among sea currents and related exercises were chief highlights of the event.

A-PAD’s initiation of this training program aims at providing professionalism to the local skills as well as harness resources while reaching international standards.

International Trainers From Left to Right : Mr. Ciou-Hong Lai, Mr. Chih-Shun Chiu, Mr. Chun-Yuan Huang (A-PAD Inter-National Search and Rescue Team Leader), Mr. Wei-Chih Fang (Chief Instructor), Mr. Chen-Chien Wang and Mr. Ya-Wen Su.
Level 01 Swift Water Rescue Training
A-PAD SL - Search & Rescue Level 01 trainees.
Level 02 Swift Water Rescue Training

A-PAD SL - Search & Rescue Level 02 trainees.
Debrief sessions by (Left) Mr. Firzan Hashim, Country Director A-PAD SL and (right) Mr. Chun-Yuan Huang, A-PAD Inter-National Search and Rescue Team Leader
A-PAD Sri Lanka in partnership with Sri Lanka Life Saving Association (SLLS) conducted search and rescue trainings for the volunteer V-Force team of Gammadda in February 2020 in capacitating youth who could transition into potential first responders that could assist search and rescue teams, media teams and network local resources. Sri Lanka Life Saving providing the technical expertise to these training programs, carried out basic know-hows on water based activities which could be useful in times if natural disasters, like the floods.

Safety First concept was the main highlight of this training program where a detailed demonstration on the necessary equipment that ought to be used were displayed. Furthermore A-PAD Sri Lanka provided internationally recognized equipment for the trainees to ensure personal safety and confidence when in the water. The technical guidance to drowning rescue, identifying and understanding the waters and entry/ exits points were covered at these sessions. The volunteer teams were thus exposed to the experiential methods that are put into practice in search and rescue.

The training enabled the group of V-Force team members to comprehend the importance and the innumerable effort put into lifesaving and drowning prevention along with being a part of an invaluable training session and were also certified by SLLS.

Attendees engaging in the activities.
The widespread of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka saw a nationwide alert amongst the general public and health sector practitioners. In aiding to support the locality to contain and overcome the pandemic, A-PAD Sri Lanka provincial platforms were instrumental along with its membership to immediately assist the prevalent needs. Responding to a request made by the Government Agent Jaffna, A-PAD Northern platform joined hands with the Chamber of Commerce and Industries Jaffna (C CIY), Kirubaa Learners Pvt Ltd and Annai Sea Food Pvt Ltd, in providing essential medical items, emergency disinfectant equipment for frontline health workers and public town points, following the lockdown of Thaavady Village in the Uduvil Division.

Furthermore, the Eastern Provincial Platform handed over Knapsack Power Sprays to the Government Agent of Trincomalee in order to disinfect public hospitals and key areas identified by the Regional Health Services.

We would like to thank our partners and the District Disaster Management Units of the Northern and Eastern Provinces for their continuous efforts in contributing towards containing this global pandemic amidst stringent times!

Mr. T N Sooriyaraj, Asst. Director, Disaster Management Center, Mr. K Mahesan, District Secretariat (GA) of Jaffna and Mr. K Kirubakaran, Director of Kirubaa Learners and Mr. P X Calis, A-PAD SL at the handing over of essential medical items. (Left to right)