

WAGGGS STATEMENT ON COVID-19

Updated 3 March 2020

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus, the family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. Most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.

World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the global risk level to be high, and is working with global experts, governments and partners to provide advice to countries and individuals on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak.

More information: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

WAGGGS POSITION

WAGGGS takes the safety and wellbeing of its staff, volunteers and members extremely seriously and we have been monitoring the situation on the COVID-19 outbreak closely. As an organisation, we are following the advice provided by the World Health Organization, our insurers and guidance by local governments and we are confident that we have the right measures in place. This currently includes travel restrictions to mainland China, Iran and some parts of South Korea and Italy.

We also encourage all our Member Organisations to monitor updates from the World Health Organization ([situation reports](#)), and follow local government travel advice and guidance from insurers when organising events where international or large-scale national travel is required.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW64)

As of today, the United Nations (UN) has announced that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) will revise its format in light of concerns regarding the coronavirus disease. The Commission has cancelled the general debate and all side events and has decided to convene for a procedural meeting only. In light of this, WAGGGS has suspended all activities relating to CSW64 and the 14 Advocacy Champions due to attend will no longer travel to New York.

37TH WAGGGS WORLD CONFERENCE

The Uganda government Ministry of Health has issued a [press statement](#), which announced a temporary restriction on international conferences and the introduction of mandatory quarantines for visitors from certain countries. The Conference Planning Team therefore expect that postponement of the World Conference is a strong possibility. We continue to monitor this situation closely with the Uganda Girl Guides Association.

Based on thorough risk assessment, the World Board will make a decision at the latest in the first weekend of April as to whether World Conference goes ahead as planned or move to a contingency. **Week commencing 6 April 2020**, a communication will be published to announce this decision, providing three months' notice before the start of Conference. In the meantime, the Planning Team advise participants NOT to book travel or accommodation as we continue to monitor developments.

CONTACT

For general concerns or questions relating to COVID-19, please contact Magdalene Thomas, WAGGGS Head of International Operations.

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