18 March 2020

WOSM’s Updated COVID-19 Advisory for NSOs

Dear Friends,

As the spread of COVID-19 continues to impact more countries, individuals and sectors, we are also witnessing a significant increase in the actions taken by governments and organisations to counter the spread and reduce the impact on people and operations. The safety of all Scouts is our utmost priority at WOSM, and we take the health, safety and well-being of young people, volunteer and staff very seriously. Following our first advisory on COVID-19, we strongly urge all NSOs to follow WHO’s recommended good practices, and your respective country health authorities for guidance as we navigate these uncertain times together.

Suspension of All World and Regional Events in March and April

At the World and Regional levels, all meetings, workshops and events for March and April have been suspended or postponed, to mitigate the risk of spreading the illness and ensure safety of all our volunteers and staff. Among these events include the Africa Scout Day celebrations, 6th World Scout Interreligious Symposium, APR Scout Leaders Summit and others. Additionally, the World Scout Bureau has issued mandatory working from home arrangements and a travel ban for staff, as well as other measures that prioritise staff safety.

We strongly recommend that NSOs shift to virtual participation for Scout meetings or events, or suspend meetings altogether. WOSM is also directly supporting the organisers of major Scout events this summer, including the European and African Jamborees as well as the Arab Moot. Together with the Host NSOs, partners and government authorities we are monitoring the situation to ensure the safety of all concerned. Please also continue to monitor the situation in your respective countries closely, and make informed decisions that prioritise the health, safety and well-being of all members.

Status of the 42nd World Scout Conference and 14th World Scout Youth Forum

WOSM is continuing to monitor and evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the 42nd World Scout Conference and the 14th World Scout Youth Forum, scheduled to take place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt this August 2020. We are working closely together with our Host, the Egyptian Scout Federation as well as the Egyptian government to assess the situation and evaluate options in light of current developments. For now, we request all NSOs to delay purchasing airline tickets or making further travel arrangements until WOSM conducts a full assessment and issues a communication about the status of events. More guidance and details for participants will continue to be updated to the conference website as it becomes available.
We are aware that these are extraordinary times, and that the cancellation of events and Scout gatherings is very disappointing. However, keeping young people, volunteers and staff safe will always be our top priority. We will continue to keep our Member Organizations informed of further developments. Shortly we will be announcing plans for activating our Movement through a series of digital engagements aimed at supporting young people during this period.

If you have any questions regarding the COVID-19 illness, or require support from WOSM in promoting health and safety standards within your NSO, please contact your WSB Regional Support Centre.

Yours in Scouting,

Ahmad Alhendawi
Secretary General,
World Organization of the Scout Movement