

## **COVID-19 Developments in China and Korea's Planned Response**

### **중국 관련 코로나19 동향 및 대응계획**

PRESS RELEASE

DEC 30, 2022

The Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters(CDSCHQ) has received and deliberated on a report entitled "The COVID-19 Trend in China and Response Plan" from the Central Disease Control Headquarters(headed by Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Commissioner Youngmee Jee).

Uncertainty has grown about the spread of COVID-19 cases in China since the government suspended the release of official statistics, and the government is expected to ease its quarantine measures, to include the suspension of mandatory quarantine for persons entering China from outside. At the same time, the influx of COVID positive cases into Korea from China, from 19 in November to 278 between December 1 through 29.

A genome-wide analysis of 41 samples from positive cases coming into Korea from China has detected the presence of Omicron sub-variants such as BA.5 and BF.7.

\* The genome analysis has been completed on 41 cases (thirty-four BA.5, six BF.7 and one BA.275. while another 36 cases are under analysis.

To tighten its monitoring of China's COVID-19 situation, the Korean government has added (as of December 16) China to the quarantine target list at Incheon International Airport prior to entry into Korea. The samples from persons who test positive for COVID-19 are subjected to a genome-wide analysis, and the monitoring for variants has been stepped up, but their spread has continued and the possibility of their entry into Korea is increasing. Therefore the related Korean government agencies are working together and are discussing the situation with experts in an effort to minimize the effect on Korea. As a result, five courses of action have been put in place to prevent the spread of the disease from persons who enter the country from China.

To complete preparations and inform the public, these measures are scheduled to be followed temporarily between January 2 and February 28. Their

implementation is subject to extension, depending on the situation subsequent to that period.

First, the government has concluded that short-term travel to Korea must be restricted until the preventative effort has stabilized, and so the Korean diplomatic offices in China are restricting the issuance of short-term visas.

However, the issuance of such visas is possible for those involved in diplomatic affairs, conducting essential corporate operations, or traveling for humanitarian reasons. The visa issuance restriction is initially set to run through January 31 but could be extended, depending on the situation subsequently.

Second, the number of current flights to Korea from China, which is about five percent lower than the pre-pandemic level, will be reduced somewhat, and the addition of new flights will be restricted.

Additionally, Incheon International Airport will be designated the sole port of entry, among the nation's four international airports, for travelers from China in order to control securely their inflow into the country.

- \* The three flights per week arriving at regional airports (Gimhae, Daegu, and Jeju) will be temporarily suspended (reducing the total number of flights from 65 flights to 62, starting from January 2)

Third, as a preemptive quarantine measure, all persons who enter Korea from China will be subject to testing before and after entry.

All domestic and foreign persons who board a plane that is bound for Korea shall be required to submit the results of a PCR test that was taken within 48 hours of their departure or a RAT test that was administered by a doctor within 24 hours of their departure (starting from January 5).

However, test exemption criteria will be set to allow persons with emergency matters to enter Korea.

In addition, all persons who enter Korea shall be required (starting January 2) to take a PCR test within one day of entering the country.

To manage their testing, non-Koreans who are on a short stay shall be tested immediately upon their entry into the country and then shall wait in an isolated area until the test results have been confirmed.

Korean nationals and non-Koreans on a long-term stay shall be tested at a public health center in the vicinity of their residence within one day after their entry into the country, and they shall remain at their residence until the test results have been confirmed.

Fourth, passengers in China shall be required to use the Quarantine Information Advance Input System (Q-CODE) before boarding flights to Korea. This is done as a way to prevent confusion at the place of entry and manage securing the testing that is performed before and after entry into Korea.

Passengers bound for Korea shall, before boarding their flight, enter in the Q-CODE their address and contact number while in Korea; anyone who does not use the Q-CODE shall not be allowed to board the plane.

Fifth, quarantine measures are being tightened for all persons who enter Korea from China and are confirmed to have COVID.

Non-Korean nationals who are on a short stay in Korea and have been confirmed to have COVID are kept at temporary housing facilities operated in cities and provinces nationwide to manage. Persons who are confirmed to have COVID during the process of their entering the country are managed at temporary reception facilities. Korean nationals who test positive for COVID after returning to Korea from China are also under strict controls to ensure the adhere closely to the rules.

The government's current measures have been decided to minimize risk related to the uncertainties surrounding the possibility of new variants being generated in China and their spread to Korea. Korean nationals are also asked to minimize their travel to China unless the situation is urgent. Those who must visit China for unavoidable reasons such as business operation are asked to take all the preventative precautions without fail, to include getting vaccinated and wearing a mask.

In addition, should the danger become real that the number of confirmed COVID cases entering the country from China is surging or should new variants of Chinese origin be verified, the government will quickly consider including China on the special watchlist and implementing additional measures for quarantining persons who enter Korea.

// For inquiries, contact Public Relations Division, Ministry of Health and Welfare  
044-202-2048 or [cys12@korea.kr](mailto:cys12@korea.kr)