

CORRUPTION SHOULD BE TACKLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS COVID-19

“ACTUALLY, CORRUPTION IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN COVID-19. SINCE CORONAVIRUS INFECTION REQUIRES DIRECT CONTACT WITH OTHER PATIENTS OR THINGS TOUCHED BY OTHER PATIENTS, PROPER PROTECTION CAN MITIGATE CONTAGIOUS RISK TO A CERTAIN EXTENT. AS FOR CORRUPTION, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US INEVITABLY SUFFERS FROM ITS ADVERSE EFFECT WITH NO EXCEPTION REGARDLESS OF HOW WELL WE ATTEMPT TO PROTECT OURSELVES.”



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COVID-19 andemic is undoubtedly the most crucial matter affecting us all and our ways of livings. The rapid escalation of infection rate in all parts of the globe and at home is both alarming and threatening.

According to official information from the World Health Organization as of March 13, 2020 (https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200313-sitrep-53-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=adb3f72_2) number of confirmed case globally total 132,758, including 51,767 outside China (75 in Thailand), while death toll hit 4,955 (one in Thailand).

In the wake of outbreak jitters, we have seen dynamic and orchestrated movements by many organizations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 continuously and systematically. All walks of life closely monitor news, share relevant information about the outbreak development and ways to cope with it through social media channels like Line, E-mail, Facebook etc.

Both public and private agencies ran various campaigns and conducted measures to mitigate risks of spreading COVID-19. Many organizations, including the IOD, called off events and activities that require gathering of many people, encouraged staffs to work from home, held teleconferences instead of actual meetings, and introduced 14-days self-quarantine measures for staffs who returned from risky countries.

As certain anti-outbreak social norms have been established, violation of such norms could create severe public anger and ignite massive criticism both online and offline.

Such violation include cases like people who returned from risky countries but refused to provide accurate travel record to medical staffs or illegal workers who returned from South Korea but declined to undergo 14-day self-quarantine.

A number of Thais felt extremely angry with violation of social norm in this regard and even demanded penalties for those careless people who could turn out to be super spreader of coronavirus in Thailand.

In a way, corruption is similar to COVID-19. It has been spreading in our society for a fairly long time and we still are unable to contain or eliminate it. Actually, corruption is even more dangerous than COVID-19. Since coronavirus infection requires direct contact with other patients or things touched by other patients, proper protection like face mask usage, frequent hand washing, and avoidance of using hands to touch eyes, nose, and mouth can mitigate contagious risk to a certain extent. As for corruption, every single one of us inevitably suffers from its adverse effect with no exception regardless of how well we attempt to protect ourselves.

Perhaps the reasons we do not see corruption as severe and harmful threat as COVID-19 are because we feel that corruption is distant, the damage is not as explicit, while some get used to it already and see no urgency in tackling it.



More importantly, the damage usually occurs to the society as a whole, not to us individually, unlike the Coronavirus where lives of infected persons are at stakes. Therefore, we tirelessly pour in all efforts to protect ourselves from getting infected and strongly oppose those with risky behaviors that may turn them into super spreaders.

At the time when the Thai society is fully alert with COVID-19 protection, I would like to call for the private sector, especially board of directors, to consider how corruption, like Coronavirus, is threatening our society. It is essential that we all join hands and work together to solve corruption problem the way we take parts in preventing COVID-19 from spreading. For those who still have no idea where to start, I recommend seeking advice from Thailand's Collective Action Coalition against Corruption (CAC) www.thai-cac.com. This could be a starting point to become part of the clean business community that would eventually lead to creation of corruption-free environment down the road.