



March 19, 2020

Dear colleagues of member cities,

As you have already been informed, the 17th World Conference of Historical Cities scheduled to take place in Kazan, the Russian Federation in June, is decided to be postponed.

The whole world is now faced with the serious crisis which we have never experienced before because of the spread of COVID-19. I would like to extend my deep condolences to the families who have lost the beloved ones. I would also like to show the utmost respect to those who are devoting themselves to preventing the spread day and night.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, strict travel restrictions are enforced, which has economically damaged many historical cities around the world. Your regions and Kyoto are no exception. The advanced globalization in recent years has not only helped people travel much easier but also enhanced worldwide channels for products and information, which has brought us enormous benefits. On the other hand, we must admit that such globalization would also spread the negatives including the virus so rapidly around the world, which is now out of our control. In this open world, it is surely important for historical cities to introduce measures to attract tourists by disseminating their historical and cultural charms to the world, but it is also crucial for us to implement countermeasures against any risks to save our cities and our values. Now, each of you including myself is required to take flexible actions to resolve our current situation.

The temporal restrictions enforced internationally, especially travel restrictions, must not interfere with any future relations nor exchanges amongst cities. At this difficult time, we need to strengthen our ties, share practices and information, and overcome our crisis together. After experiencing this difficulty together, I hope that our stronger bonds and wills will help us retrieve our exchanges and activate them further.

Once the new dates are set for the 17th World Conference, I would like to ask for your kind cooperation on the conference and your support to make it a success.

In closing, let me send you my heartfelt wishes for good health and safety.

Yours Sincerely,

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