



Ref. No. 288/2020

27 February 2020

Subject: Cancellation of the AUN-QA International Conference 2020 in Bandung

Dear Presidents, Rectors, and Vice Chancellors of AUN Member Universities and AUN-QA Associate Members,

On 18 February 2020, I asked my Chief Strategy Officer, Mr. Korn Ratanagosoom, to send an email to all participants and their universities, informing them of some necessary travel measures for their participation in the AUN-QA International Conference 2020 in Bandung, and the AUN Secretariat would also continue monitoring the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, and would keep everyone informed if any concern arises.

As you may know, to date, the situation has not improved, and that it has unavoidably affected our Conference, of which the consequences are shown in the following lines:

(a) The growing number of declined speakers:

- We have invited 19 International speakers and moderators (not including local speakers).
- More than 80% of the total number of international speakers and moderators have declined or expressed concerns.

(b) Universities' internal policies:

- Many universities in several countries imposed travel restrictions for their staff and have announced the post-travel self-quarantine protocol discouraging participation of their own staff in the large-scale gathering abroad.

(c) The growing number of cancelled international participants:

- Referring to (b), there has been an increasing number of cancellations of participants from Brunei, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

(d) Announcement from governments

- There have been announcements issued by most governments in ASEAN urging their own citizens not to travel to the affected areas and high-risk countries. Therefore, it will make travelling to Bandung during this period very difficult in terms of participant's logistical arrangement.

(e) Spread of the virus

- This is the most worrying factor as it affects the health and well-being of all participants, considering that the AUN-QA International Conference is expected to involve up to 300 people. As gathered from various reliable sources, the spread of the virus can be summarized as below:

i. Spread patterns.../

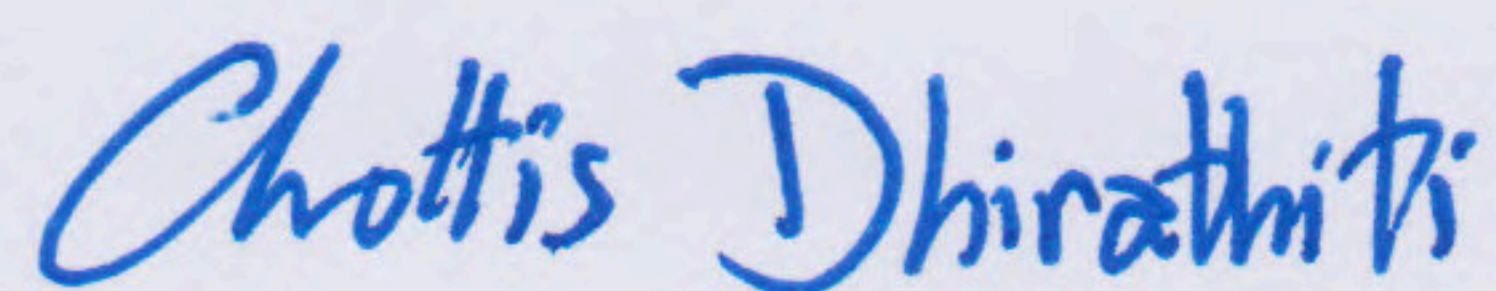
- i. Spread patterns
 - Start with animal-to-person
 - Now contracting person-to-person
 - Spread through air (not confirmed to be aerosol)
 - Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects
- ii. Ideal conditions for transmission
 - Mass gathering
 - Shared confined space
- iii. The causes of over-the-border transmission
 - Tourists
 - International travel
 - Business meeting
 - Country being the major hub of air transport
- iv. Trends of transmission as of 26 February 2020
 - Possible declining transmission in China
 - Increasing transmission across the World

At this point, we are facing the alternatives of whether to pursue or to cancel the event in Bandung. The operational argument in favor of pursuing it must be exceptionally strong, that we could overcome the health risks and achieve effective results of the International Conference. The risk and effectiveness considerations point overwhelmingly to the cancellation of International Conference.

I deeply regret that it will no longer be possible for the AUN Secretariat and the Institut Teknologi Bandung to organize the AUN-QA International Conference and all related meetings in Bandung in March 2020.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Head of International Relations, Head of QA Unit, AUN-QA Assessors, registered participants of the AUN-QA International Conference, and all invited speakers.

Yours sincerely,



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