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# CHINA PICTORIAL

## Staying with China in Battle against Novel Coronavirus

<http://china-pictorial.com.cn/staying-with-china-in-battle-against-novel-coronaviruses?from=timeline>

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*January 29, 2020: Several foreigners pass by a Starbucks store near Xuanwumen in downtown Beijing. Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, almost everyone in the street wears a mask. by Yu Xiangjun*

I have heard of viral epidemics such as swine flu (H1N1), Ebola, SARS, MERS, and bird flu (H5N1 and H7N9) before, but during my lifetime from Cameroon to China, I had never closely experienced one, until this year when I heard the media reporting about a flu-like viral infection in the central Chinese city of Wuhan caused by a novel coronavirus.

At the beginning I was not really bothered as only a few cases were reported back then. However, as more and more cases were announced nationally, it started worrying me. Especially when the first international case was reported in the United States, the overall atmosphere started to change. My colleagues and I were soon advised by our university authorities to reduce our outdoors activities and take a certain amount of protective measures to keep safe. As an international teacher and researcher at Zhejiang Normal University in Jinhua City, what first came to my mind was the safety of our diverse communities of foreign teachers, students and friends who have chosen to stay in China during this winter vacation. To be honest, I was bothered by many thoughts that came into my mind. For example, should I book the next flight for home? Should I stay and experience this once-in-a-lifetime experience? Should I join the fight and contribute to defeat this new enemy? If I stay, what can I really do to contribute since I'm not a medical expert?

Instantaneously, I recollected the friendly moments I had with my Chinese friends, colleagues and students; they have left me with unforgettable memories of joyful moments. “A friend in need is a friend indeed,” I said to myself. Moreover, China has been so friendly with Africa. I also remembered an African wisdom well-known as “Ubuntu,” a philosophic concept literally meaning “I am because we are,” for, in African wisdom, “others are the reason for us to be.” So I decided to stay and contribute to the best of my abilities, not only by following rigorously the instructions given by the university authorities and the municipal government, but also by raising awareness and sharing the best information via social media with my communities, friends, colleagues and students in Jinhua, across China and even with my family and friends in Africa and beyond.

My primary sources of information were the constant messages I were receiving on daily basis on my mobile phone from the mobile service provider as well as from official websites and channels at the city and state levels, which provide us with precise instructions and further updates about the new coronavirus. I used my Chinese language skills to translate them and share with the large community of foreigners whose Chinese isn't fluent enough.

At the university level, we were also provided with first-hand information and instructions. For example, we were asked by the school authorities to fill out an online form on daily basis tracing back our personal locations, movements and contacted people, as well as a short report on our personal health situations; we were advised not to leave the city or for those already out of the city, not to return until new updates, etc. The university's canteen also provides safe foods and drinking water at our disposal. More information resources were made available in foreign languages for international students and teachers residing inside or outside the campus. These efforts are very impressive as the tasks have to be performed on almost every student and teacher out of the 45,000 that count our university. Even though 34 cases have been reported around the city of Jinhua as of the time of writing, no case of infection has been reported within the scope of our university. So far, the number of confirmed cases in Jinhua is not significant. After all, Jinhua is a city with more than five million residents and a hub of trade and transportation in China.

I am confident that we are winning the battle against the novel coronavirus in our community and proud to extend our encouragements to other communities, especially that of Wuhan which is the most affected city

among all. The world can be assured that China will get out of this crisis, growing stronger than ever.

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