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UFI and SISO call for “Testing over Quarantine” policies to keep businesses going

UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, and SISO, the Society for Independent Show Organizers, today call on policymaker and governments around the world to empower the best policy solutions to maintain the flow of people, products, and services - and in doing so, to activate the potentials of rapid antigen COVID tests.

The statement, signed by UFI President Mary Larkin (President Diversified Communications, USA) and SISO Chair Doug Emslie (Group Chief Executive, Tarsus Group), reads:

“Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused a global recession unlike anything we have seen in generations. Going forward, and until the global community has developed and rolled out vaccination programmes, we have to find the best solutions possible to maintain the flow of people, products, and services. This is needed to stabilize business, to avoid economic hardships for citizens around the world as government support programmes are being scaled back over time.

The exhibitions industry possesses one of the critical skills for any economic recovery: It sets up and operates the market places and meeting places for industries and communities to meet for business. Trade shows and exhibitions are organised events, as recognized by the WHO and governments. They are not unorganized mass gatherings. In recent months, hundreds of trade shows have taken place, predominantly in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, with health and safety measures in place, based on global industry standards and aligned with local regulations. **Not one of them has caused a COVID outbreak.**

At the same time, hundreds of relevant trade shows have to be cancelled or postponed, as buyers and sellers cannot plan to attend, primarily due to travel restrictions and fast changing quarantine regulations. For economies to recover, for sectors to restart, the business community needs clarity and reliable regulations for the coming months.

Rapid antigen COVID tests are reliable and becoming widely available. These Rapid Tests provide the best solution for creating a safe environment to hold managed business events. We call on governments and authorities to follow a “testing before quarantine” approach for business related travel and activities.

Rapid testing can be applied pre- and post-flight, and at the check in points for events – replacing the need for people to quarantine if tests are negative. Combined with the existing safety measures around events, this will create a safe and reliable framework for business professionals to engage, and can overcome the current impasse that is causing additional economic damage every day.

As a sector, we stand ready to implement rapid testing processed around our organised events. We ask governments and authorities to work with our sector, to activate our knowledge and expertise, to make sure businesses can meet and do business throughout the current pandemic.”



Mary Larkin
UFI President



Douglas Emslie
SISO Chair