

Novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV

Papua New Guinea Situation Update 1

27 January 2020



World Health
Organization
Representative Office
for Papua New Guinea

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ On 31 December 2019, the Government of China reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan, Hubei Province. A novel coronavirus 2019 n-CoV was identified in January 2020. Since then, cases and deaths have been reported across China and in several other countries. **It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases.**
- ❑ As of **26 January 2020**, a total of 2,014 confirmed 2019-nCoV cases have been reported globally: 1,985 were from China, including Hong Kong SAR (5 confirmed cases), Macau SAR (2 confirmed cases) and Taipei (3 confirmed cases).
- ❑ Twenty-nine confirmed cases have been reported **outside of China in ten countries**: Japan; Republic of Korea; Viet Nam; Singapore; Australia; Malaysia; Thailand; Nepal; United States of America; France. Of these 29 exported cases, 26 had a travel history from Wuhan City, China.
- ❑ Of the 1,975 confirmed cases (excluding Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taipei), 324 cases have been reported as severely ill. **Fifty-six deaths** have been reported to date (52 deaths in Hubei province and 4 from outside Hubei).
- ❑ Although it is clear that **human-to-human transmission is taking place**, more analysis is needed to understand the full extent of human-to-human transmission. Not enough is known to draw definitive conclusions about how it is transmitted, clinical features of disease and disease severity, or the extent to which it has spread and its source, which also remains unknown.
- ❑ To date, Papua New Guinea has **NO case of novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV** but we are on heightened alert to detect any possible entry into the country.
- ❑ **Papua New Guinea, is considered high risk of importing the disease** into the country and because of our limited capacity and resources, the **risk of spread as high in the event that the virus enters the country.**
- ❑ As the 2019-nCoV outbreak is quickly evolving, the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the National Department of Health (NDOH), with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), has been monitoring the situation and has put in place a **preparedness and response plan.**
- ❑ There is **no travel and trade restrictions**. PNG has measures in place to screen and monitor sick passengers. We enjoin travellers to self-report if they feel ill.

PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES IN PLACE

The National Department of Health has activated its preparedness and response mechanisms and have put in place the following measures:

- ☐ **Hotline +675 71960813** is activated for public to report travellers from China who have symptoms (fever, cough and shortness of breath).
- ☐ **Airport measures** that include advisory to arriving passengers through the airlines and filling up of health declaration forms. We have also airlines screening passengers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Manila before they board the aircraft.
- ☐ We are coordinating with **airlines operators** for measures in case a passenger gets sick on board an aircraft.
- ☐ A **Health Desk** will be assigned at the Jacksons International Airport and we are currently recruiting health workers to manage the health desks. We have provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to the airport staff.
- ☐ An **isolation area** is being prepared as the designated ward for any suspected case. Anyone suspected of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) will be isolated as soon as detected at Jacksons International Airport and transported to the designated area.
- ☐ The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology **laboratory** is designated to test for novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
- ☐ A trained **rapid response team** will be mobilized to conduct case investigation and contact tracing.
- ☐ Advisory on the prevention measures have been **disseminated to the public**. Access the NDOH (<https://www.facebook.com/PNGNDOH/>) and WHO Papua New Guinea (<https://www.facebook.com/WHOPapuaNewGuinea/>) Facebook pages for updated information.

ADVISORY TO THE PUBLIC

We urge the public to be responsible. Share prevention measures. Do NOT spread fake information or rumours. Call the hotline if you need information.

Protect yourself and your family through hand and respiratory hygiene, and safe food practices:

- ☐ Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- ☐ When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- ☐ Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- ☐ If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider;
- ☐ When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- ☐ The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

Attachment: health advice to reduce risk of coronavirus

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