

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Papua New Guinea Situation Report 11



28 February 2020

This Situation Report is issued twice a week (Tuesday and Friday) by the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Report is not comprehensive and covers information that we have as of reporting date.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Papua New Guinea has **no case of COVID-19**, to date.
- ❑ **Globally**, there are **51 countries** affected by COVID-19 as of 28 February. It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases. There have been **67 deaths reported outside of China**.
- ❑ As of 27 February, a total of **17,518 persons were screened** at the Jacksons International Airport. The health team has identified **510 'persons of interest'** and are being monitored regularly by the surveillance team.
- ❑ There have been **nine persons investigated** by the rapid response team. Samples were collected from **seven persons**, **all tested negative** for coronavirus. The other two persons did not meet the case definition.
- ❑ On 28 February, A/Secretary of Health Dr Paison Dakulala received 15 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items (750kg) worth of AUD66,244.25 from Australian High Commission in PNG, which will be used by the health workers.
- ❑ Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have now completed quarantine at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has returned to Port Moresby on 25 February.
- ❑ The PNG Government has provided funds to implement the **PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19**: PGK 3.3 million from the NDoH while the Department of Treasury has released PGK 10 million.
- ❑ The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) continues to coordinate national preparedness measures and conducts daily operations meetings. Provincial EOCs have been activated are making preparedness and response plans. A readiness checklist is being prepared for provinces to support in the mapping of resources and gaps.

GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(The numbers are based on WHO Situation Report as of 28 February 2020. The figures change very quickly.)

Globally: 83,652 confirmed
China: 78,961 confirmed (2,791 deaths)

Outside China:
4,691 confirmed
67 deaths
51 countries

Papua New Guinea has no reported case as of 28 February 2020



PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

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

Coordination and Leadership

- ❑ The **PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19** is being updated to modify scenarios based on the evolving situation. The revised plan will be circulated next week. Color-coded scenarios and appropriate scale of response had been developed for PNG as basis for the preparedness and response planning.

Coordination and Leadership for COVID-19

Daily Operations Meeting (for Cluster Leads and WHO technical counterparts)

- ❑ 8:30 – 9:00 AM

Every Tuesday: Inter-sectoral Coordination Taskforce (ICTF) for COVID-19

- ❑ 10:00 – 11:00 AM

- ❑ PGK 3.3 million from the NDOH and PGK 10million from the Department of Treasury have been approved for release for the implementation of the **PNG ERP for COVID-19**.
- ❑ The **Ministerial Committee on COVID-19**, chaired by Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS provides the strategic leadership and guidance to the preparedness and response. (*The membership of the Ministerial Committee is listed as an annex to this report.*)
- ❑ The **Intersectoral Coordination Task Force (ICTF) on COVID-19**, chaired by the Acting Deputy Secretary for National Health Services Standards meets weekly to coordinate overall implementation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 in PNG. The taskforce comprises of one focal person from all relevant stakeholders. The last meeting of the ICTF was held on 25 February. (*The membership of the ICTF is listed as an annex to this report.*)
- ❑ To manage day-to-day operations, the **National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC)** continues to meet daily since its activation on 27 January 2020. The cluster leads have been identified based on the incident management. (*The membership of the NEOC is listed as an annex to this report.*)
- ❑ Provincial Health Authorities have activated their PEOCs and have started preparations. NEOC designated **four Regional Coordinators** to liaise with the PEOCs on to support provinces in preparing for response to COVID-19, and also to ensure timely support [*for details, refer Section 'Updates from Regional Clusters'*].
- ❑ The **declaration denying entry into Papua New Guinea** all persons who have travelled to mainland China (Designated Region) unless they have spent **14 consecutive days in a country outside of the designated region** issued on February 14 by the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong is still in effect.
- ❑ Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have **now completed quarantine** at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has **returned to Port Moresby on 25 February**.

Points of Entry (POE)

- Health screening at Jacksons International Airport and at seaports continues.

Consolidated information from Point of Entries (airport/seaport) as of 27 February 2020

Point of Entry	No of flights/vessels screened	No of inbound Passengers/travellers Screened	No of People Referred to Surveillance/RRT	Notes
Jacksons International Airport (28 Jan – 27 Feb)	287 (commercial and private flights)	17,518	510	10 staff assigned to airport in 6-7 daily flights
Seaports (Port Moresby) (excluding provincial data) (28 Jan – 27 Feb)	Updated data on seaports will be included in the next Situation Report			3 -5 Quarantine Officers assigned daily

Health screening at airport and seaports



Surveillance and Laboratory

- The surveillance system uses multiple sources of information and has a team of trained surveillance officers (rapid response team) that have been mobilized to conduct case investigation and contact tracing.
- The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology laboratory is designated laboratory to test for COVID-19 in PNG.

Consolidated information from surveillance and laboratory as of 27 February 2020.

Persons of interest (travel history)	Persons cleared completing 14-days self-quarantine	Persons under investigation (monitored)	Samples sent to Laboratory	Negative Result	Pending
510	233	9 (7 samples collected; 2 did not meet case definition)	7	7	0

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control

- ❑ An isolation ward of 8 beds continues to be prepared at Port Moresby General Hospital.
- ❑ On 25 February, an IPC expert from WHO provided technical guidance to staff of NDoH and St John Ambulance on IPC procedures while transferring suspects/cases.
- ❑ The NDOH is working with private medical providers and industries by providing guidelines on case management and infection prevention and control.
- ❑ **The issue of PPE supplies for the nation remain to be a concern.** The call for assistance from business houses, corporate entities, and our stakeholders to support still exists.

Coronavirus Disease COVID-19

FOR: HEALTHCARE FACILITY MANAGEMENT
Preparing for COVID-19 at your healthcare facility

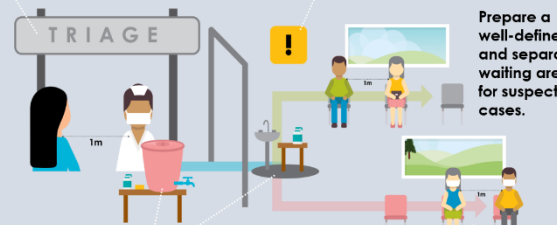
Have a triage station at the healthcare facility entrance, prior to any waiting area, to screen patients for COVID-19. This limits potential infection throughout the health care center.

Post information, like posters and flyers, that remind patients and visitors to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Prepare a well-defined and separate waiting area for suspected cases.

Have alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water handwashing stations readily available for the use of healthcare workers, patients and visitors.

Be alert for anyone that may have symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing.



Protect your workforce
Be ready! Ensure your healthcare and triage workers:

- Are trained on the importance, selection and proper use of personal protective equipment
- Are trained to spot symptoms of a potential COVID-19 infection and offer a medical mask to suspected cases
- Know the case definition and have a decision flow diagram available and accessible for reference at the triage station
- Isolate a suspected case promptly
- Perform hand hygiene frequently





Coronavirus Disease COVID-19

FOR: HEALTHCARE FACILITY MANAGEMENT
Managing patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 at your healthcare facility

Staff should wear appropriate personal protective equipment when screening patients at the triage station. Provide medical masks to all patients presenting with flu-like symptoms or reporting possible COVID-19 infection. Remind all patients to use good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Managing Placement

- Immediately isolate suspected and confirmed cases
- To reduce stress and anxiety, explain to patients what you do and why you do it
- If possible, place patients in single rooms
- Suspected and confirmed cases should be kept separate
- Maintain at least 1-metre distance between all patients
- Do not put more than one patient in a single hospital bed

Managing the Environment

- Limit the movement of patients within the health center to reduce potential infection throughout the healthcare facility
- If a patient needs to be moved, plan the move ahead: all staff and visitors who come into direct contact with the patient should wear personal protective equipment
- Perform regular environmental cleaning and disinfection
- Maintain good ventilation – if possible open doors and windows

Managing Visitors

- As much as possible, restrict visitors
- If necessary, limit the number of visitors per patient
- All visitors should wear the required personal protective equipment and their visits should be recorded





Communication and Community Engagement

- ❑ Communications plan is in place – according to color-coded scenario.
- ❑ Community guidance for social mobilizers and volunteers is developed (attached to this report)
- ❑ Regular media briefing is conducted. Next media briefing is on Monday, 2 March 2020
- ❑ Radio spots on prevention messages continue to air on NBC.
- ❑ Information materials on prevention messages are prepared (some in Pidgin), sent to provinces.
- ❑ Risk communication materials for health workers and health facilities developed and shared with provinces and partners.
- ❑ NDOH and UNICEF are working with Ministry of Education on supporting schools with materials for children. Familiarization programs have commenced.

UPDATES FROM REGIONAL CLUSTERS

A. *Momase Region*

- ☐ Reactivated PEOC in **all the four Provinces** in the Region: **West Sepik, East Sepik, Madang and Morobe**.
- ☐ **West Sepik:** Awareness focusing on the prevention is currently ongoing which started three weeks ago.



COVID-19 Public Information Booth in Vanimo town (24/7) setting up in progress



PNGDF chopper loading medical supplies and COVID-19 awareness teams at Vanimo airport.

- ☐ **East Sepik:** Identified MOEM Barracks as the quarantine area for 14 days and isolation site with decontamination chamber (suggested site) is Somare stadium. Identified focal persons for communications, point of entry, PPE, Surveillance, clinical management and coordination.
- ☐ **Madang:** COVID-19 campaign was launched on 15 Feb 2020. Established an inter-sectoral Committee comprising of members from Customs, NAQIA, Madang Chamber of Commerce, Madang Ports, Madang Wara PNG, Madang Provincial Government, Madang Chinese Community (MCC) and Hospital. Awareness program has been completed with all Posts workers. Planned to initiate awareness to all hotspots risk areas as a priority, after identifying the hotspot risk areas.
- ☐ **Morobe:** Developed IEC materials for COVID-19. Initiated to procure PPE. Screening of travelers at Point of entries is in place: Wampar HC for airport and Mutzing HC for road. Procured temperature sensor. For clinical management, Buimo HC and Mildfordhaven Road HC have been tasked to screen all patients with flu like symptoms (180 were screened in one week) and one patient was transferred to Angau Hospital for lab test, which was tested negative. Triaging and isolation location will be at emergency department, Hospital. Identified

B. *New Guinea Islands Region*

- ☐ Reactivated PEOC in **four Provinces** in the Region: **Manus, East New Britain, West New Britain and New Ireland**.
- ☐ **Manus:** Provincial taskforce group established, comprising members from NAC, NAQIA, Police, PNG Ports, PNGDF, NBC Manus and Immigration. A container ship was turned back to Port Moresby port to be cleared, which was done and returned to Manus. Community awareness and communication scheduled in partnership with different stakeholders. Isolation area identified for the Province.

- ☐ **East New Britain:** Currently drafting the Provincial Emergency Response Plan. Surveillance at Tokua Airport and the port in Rabaul has been in place for the last four (4) weeks. Awareness and advocacy materials being developed for mass communication. Established Provincial Emergency Response Committee chaired by the Provincial Administrator with regular scheduled meetings.
- ☐ **West New Britain:** First stakeholders meeting held on 21 February, which was attended by 50 participants from the Chamber of Commerce, NAC, business houses, Ports services, provincial administration.
- ☐ All the provinces in NGI Region received the WHO/NDOH posters on COVID-19 and will be using in their risk communication and awareness.
- ☐ WNB, ENB and Manus convened PEOC meetings on 25 February. NIP PEOC is planned to meet on 26 February.
- ☐ AROB is yet to provide the updates on their plans.

C. Highlands Region

- ☐ Reactivated PEOC in two Provinces in the Region: **Simbu and Hela**
- ☐ **Hela** submitted the Provincial ERP. Convened 3 PEOC meetings till date. An awareness campaign is currently ongoing.
- ☐ **Simbu** submitted their ERP while Enga needed to re-submit.
- ☐ **WHP, SHP, Jiwaka and EHP** will be submitting their ERPs.

D. Southern Region

- ☐ Reactivated PEOC for COVID-19 in three Provinces in the Region: **Milne Bay, Western Province and Oro**
- ☐ Completed ERP with costing: **Milne Bay, Western Province and Central Province.**

SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS

From the World Health Organization

- ☐ High-level technical briefing to Government and partners on the COVID-19 situation and action:
- ☐ Technical support in development of the PNG COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.
- ☐ Technical, operational and material support to the Government:
 - Activation of the NEOC – with people supporting various functional clusters based on the incident management system
 - Measures at the airport (people, PPE, health declaration forms and IEC materials)
 - Hospital preparedness (assessment for readiness of isolation wards, training of health workers; provision of PPE)
 - Surveillance and rapid response team (case investigation, contact tracing and deployment of staff)
 - Hotline management (putting in place system and follow-up and human resources)
 - Risk communication (advise to the Government, development of materials and talking points). Organizing media conferences and orientations.
 - Partner engagement including support in developing situation reports.
- ☐ Sharing and updating Government on technical guidelines and advising on public health measures including non-application of travel and trade restrictions
- ☐ Repurposing of staff to support the Government (supporting airport operation, surveillance and RRT, communication, partner coordination and incident management)

- ❑ Briefed UN Staff on COVID-19 and facilitated to develop UN Preparedness and Contingency Plan for COVID-19.
- ❑ Donation 300 KG of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which will be used by the health workers to care for 50 patients initially during the emergency response.

From Other Partners

- ❑ Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have now completed quarantine at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has returned to Port Moresby on 25 February.
- ❑ On 28 February, A/Secretary of Health Dr Paison Dakulala received 15 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items (750kg) worth of AUD66,244.25 from Australian High Commission in PNG, which will be used by the health workers.



ADVISORY TO THE PUBLIC

The basic principles to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections include the following:

- ❑ Avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- ❑ Frequent hand-washing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment.
- ❑ Avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.
- ❑ People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands).
- ❑ Within healthcare facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.
- ❑ When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of 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.

For any updated information and updates, check out the links below:

NDOH Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PNGNDOH/>

WHO Papua New Guinea Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WHOPapuaNewGuinea/>

WHO Website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

ANNEX 1: Coordination Mechanisms for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Papua New Guinea

Ministerial Committee on COVID-19

(Appointed by the **Prime Minister James Marape**)

- ☐ Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong (Chairperson)
- ☐ Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade Hon. Patrick Pruaitch
- ☐ Minister for Information and Communication Technology Hon. Timothy Masiu
- ☐ Minister for Civil Aviation Hon. Lekwa Gure
- ☐ Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Border Security Hon. Westly Nukundj
- ☐ Minister for State-Owned Enterprises Hon. Sasindran Muthuvel
- ☐ Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Hon. William Samb

Intersectoral Coordination Task Force on COVID-19

(Established by National Executive Council Decision 20/2020)

Chairperson: A/Deputy Secretary, National Health Services Standards Dr Sibauk Bieb

Members:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Executive Manager, Medical Standards | ☐ Representatives from: |
| ☐ Executive Manager, Public Health | - Department of Treasury |
| ☐ Executive Manager, Strategic Policy | - Department of Finance |
| ☐ Manager, Disease Control | - Department of Immigration and Citizenship Authority |
| ☐ Manager, Health Promotion | - Department of Transport and Infrastructure |
| ☐ First Secretary, Ministry of Health and HIV/AIDS | - National Airports Corporation |
| ☐ Institute of Medical Research | - Air Niugini |
| ☐ Representatives of DPs: | - PNG Ports |
| - World Health Organization (WHO) | - National Agriculture and Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) |
| - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) | - PNG Customs Service, |
| - Australian High Commission | - PNG Tourism Promotion Authority |
| - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), New Zealand | - Information Communication and Technology, |
| - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) | - PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) |
| ☐ Representatives from all private hospitals and clinics | - Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) |

PNG National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC)

Preparedness and Response for Coronavirus Disease: Cluster Leaders and Contact Details

Function	NDOH Cluster Lead	WHO Technical Counterpart
Incident management	Dr Daoni Esorom (Incident Manager and National Coordinator) Mobile: +675 72313983 Email: daoniesorom@gmail.com	Dr Zhang Zaixing Mobile: +675 74763392 Email: zhangz@who.int
Surveillance, rapid response and contact tracing	Mr Barry Ropa Mobile: +675 71291609 Email: bropa2013@gmail.com	Ms Nola Ndrewei Mobile: +675 79261425 Email: ndrewein@who.int
Clinical management, IPC, hospital preparedness and ambulance	Dr Garry Nou Mobile: +675 73028350 Email: geregana@gmail.com	Dr Anup Gurung Mobile: +675 71009914 Email: gurunga@who.int
Points of entry (airport, seaports and land crossing)	Dr Mathias Bauri Mobile: +675 70056293 Email: mathiasbauri@gmail.com	Dr James Wangi Mobile: +675 72804900 Email: wangij@who.int
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Regional Coordinator (New Guinea Islands Region)	Dr Melinda Susapu Mobile: 72956646 (Email: msusapu@gmail.com)	
Regional Coordinator (Highlands Region)	Mr Ben Kapa Mobile: 73600027 (Email: kapaben76@gmail.com)	
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