

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pacific Preparedness & Response

Compiled by:



World Health Organization
Representative Office
for the South Pacific

Joint External Situation Report #10
2 April 2020

To support Pacific COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts, a Joint Incident Management Team (JIMT) was quickly established on 27 January 2020 and has been fully operational since. This JIMT coordinated by WHO currently includes the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Island Health Officers' Association (PIHOA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Office for the Resident Coordinator (UNRCO), the World Bank Group (WB), and the World Food Programme (WFP). Through the JIMT, close coordination with Ministries of Health across the Pacific is ongoing, as well as with key partners, including the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

COVID-19 Situation Update

Pacific Island Countries and Areas Highlights

- As of 2nd April 2020, there are **143 confirmed cases of COVID-19** reported in the Pacific; **Guam** (77), **French Polynesia** (37), **New Caledonia** (16), **Fiji** (7), **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** (CNMI) (6), and 4 deaths reported from **Guam** (3) and **CNMI** (1).
- 13 countries in the Pacific including PNG have declared a State of Emergency (American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Nauru, CNMI, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu)
- 6 countries have instituted a combination of partial and full lockdowns, and curfews including Guam, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga and Vanuatu
- 7 countries have closed their borders to incoming travellers including FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Niue, Samoa and Vanuatu

Global Highlights

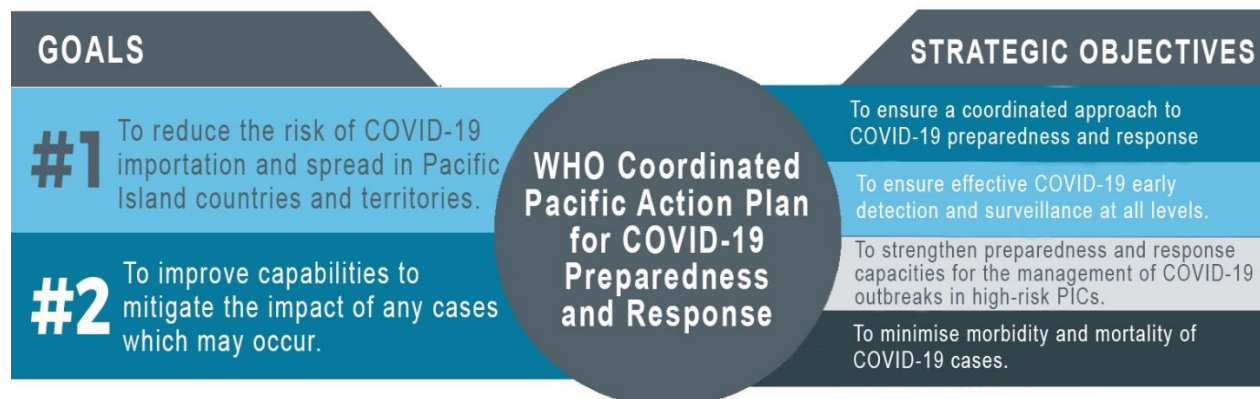
- As of WHO's Global Situation Report #73, dated 2 April 2020, there were 896,450 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 45,526 reported deaths in 205 countries and areas. The number of cases and deaths reported globally have doubled since Sitrep#9. More than half of the confirmed cases are from four countries including the United States of America with 187,302 cases, Italy with 110,574, Spain with 102,136 and China reporting 82,724 confirmed cases.

¹ WHO use only officially confirmed data which may differ from data published on other sources.

For latest WHO global updates on COVID-19, please refer to:

- [WHO COVID-Situation Reports](#)
- [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) situation dashboard](#)

Joint IMT Activities



Key achievements (26th March – 2 April)

- A total of 319 requests have been received, of which 67% have been completed.
- To date, the Joint IMT has supported 50 deployments to 16 PICs.
- Despite the global shortages and challenges with supply chain, there have been a total of 330,684 individual items procured and distributed across 17 PICs including PNG.
- Operational guidelines have been adapted for the Pacific based upon WHO guidance including household checklist for caring for persons with COVID-19 in the home, information for caregivers, information sheet for close contacts and frequently asked questions on social distancing and home quarantine

Progress on Country Support and Requests

An action tracker was developed to document, monitor and coordinate response to country requests for support related to COVID-19. To date, a total of 319 requests have been received (46 new requests), 67% of which have been fulfilled, while actions on others are ongoing. The JIMT has consistently seen the majority of requests from countries relate to risk communication and community engagement. Whilst requests are mainly related with supplies, incident management, planning and multi-sectoral coordination, they have also evolved from requests for points of entry support to clinical case management and infection prevention and control.

Surveillance

Table 1: Countries, territories and areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. Data as of 2 April 2020

Reporting Territory / Area	Country /	Total confirmed cases	Total confirmed new cases*	Total deaths	Total new deaths*
Guam		77	40	3	2
French Polynesia		37	12	0	0
New Caledonia		16	2	0	0
Northern Marianas Islands (Commonwealth of the)		6	6	1	1
Fiji		7	2	0	0
Total		143	62	4	3

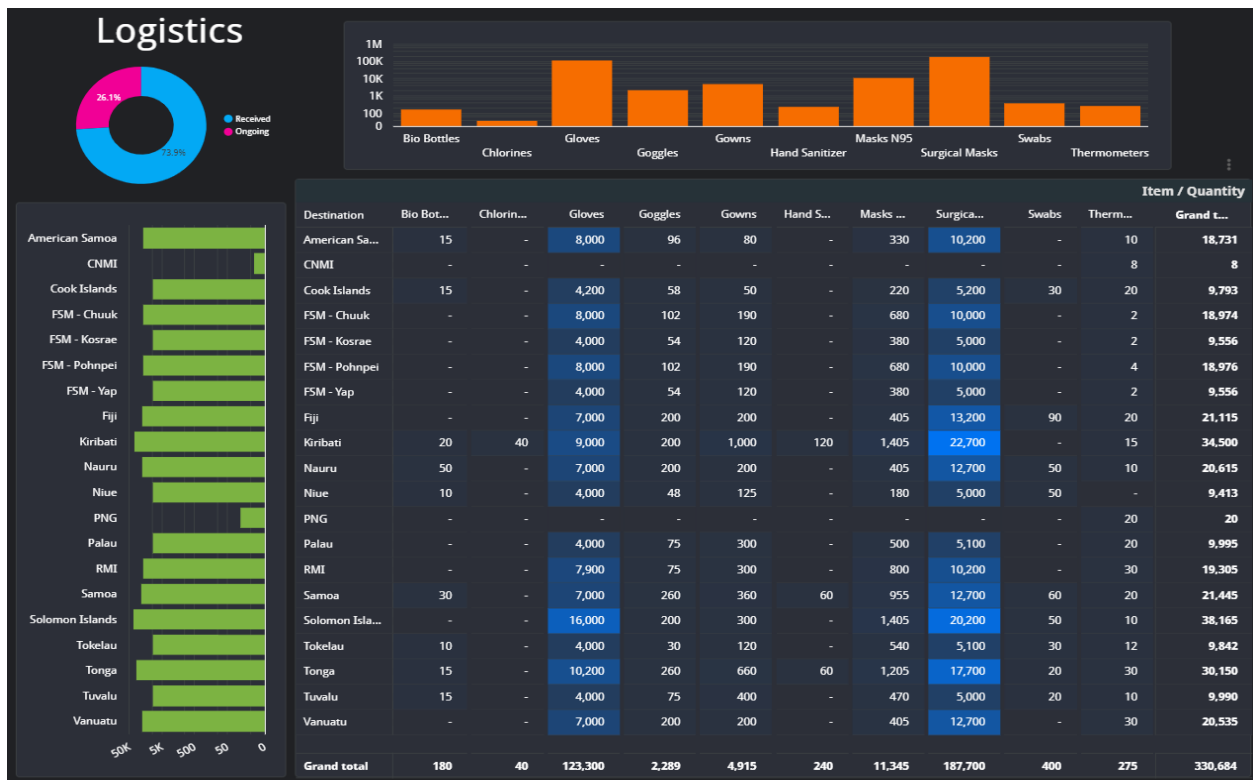
*New cases and deaths since Sitrep#9 26th March

Operations Support and Logistics

Table 2: Progress on procurement and distribution of supplies to PICs

<i>Distributed Supplies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinated and supported 66 shipment of supplies to 20 countries. ○ Distributed a total of 330,684 individual items to 17 PICs including PNG that includes bio bottles, jars of chlorine granules, gloves, goggles, gowns, hand sanitizers, N95 masks, surgical masks, swabs and thermometers. ○ Preparing to dispatch emergency shipments of PPE to address critical supply shortages in CNMI and Kiribati. ○ Facilitated the shipment of isolation tents to Kiribati. ○ Received 400 specimen transport cartons and ice packs. ○ Received 28,400 N95 respirators. ○ Sourcing oxygen concentrators and autoclaves.
<i>Supplies in the Pipeline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due to receive 1,075 safety boxes.

Below is the summary of all the supply shipments that have been delivered to PICs.



Health Operations and Technical Expertise

Table 3: Technical and Operational Preparedness Support to PICs (non-exhaustive)

Technical Area	Support Provided
<i>Case Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing guidance on the ethical prioritization of critical care. Delivered a webinar on clinical management based on experiences from China conducted for clinicians in PICs. Delivered a webinar with an expert panel on hypoxia management and oxygen therapy in low resource settings. Completed the ICU capacity and capability assessment for PICs Circulating for technical clearance an interim guidance on the management of dead bodies.
<i>Health Service Delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a protocol and advisory note on essential service planning and delivery during COVID-19.
<i>Infection Prevention and Control</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed a Pacific-adapted guidance on the rational use of PPE. Posters on PPE donning and doffing to be circulated this week Guidance on equipment and environment cleaning ready for circulation
<i>Laboratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized an order for GeneXpert cartridges Conducted a readiness assessment for the use the GeneXpert diagnostic machines for COVID-19 testing, including reviewing status and maintenance of biosafety cabinets, and required consumables and reagents for testing. Reviewed testing algorithms for those with and without testing capabilities.
<i>Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed clear terms of reference and priority actions for MHPSS in coordination with the Protection Cluster Additional MHPSS expertise being recruited

<p><i>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developed and disseminated guidance on homecare, self-isolation, and self-quarantine. ○ Continued assistance to 20 Pacific Island countries and areas for risk communication and community engagement ○ Drafted a risk communications strategy to work among existing partners to harmonize strategies and develop audience-specific content; and further collaboration through UN Communications Group to strengthen internal communications within UN in the Pacific. Communications content developed for different outlets to enhance partner coordination. ○ In coordination with the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, provided support to nine countries to establish toll-free dedicated COVID-19 hotlines to respond to community enquires. This includes guidance on establishing lines, training for call centre operators, and developing FAQs and referral pathways. ○ Continued development of templated materials to support countries with community outreach and targeted messaging, including flipcharts, presentations, posters and social media package. ○ Prioritization of messaging and outreach to vulnerable groups, with a focus on persons living with disabilities, the elderly and persons with existing health conditions that place them at higher risk of severe disease. ○ Extensive community outreach conducted by Ministries of Health, supported by partners, with a focus on information sharing and facilitating discussions with community partners on how to best prepare for and response to cases, should they occur. ○ Implementing a Pacific social media campaign promoting WHO #safehands social media challenge in the Pacific. ○ Extensive media outreach activities including: supporting Pacific media talking points for the Regional Director’s virtual press conference; conducting media interviews for TV, radio and print across the Pacific.
<p><i>Surveillance and Epidemiology</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing an active surveillance protocol and guidance for country-specific adaptation ○ Finalising a minimum dataset for surveillance data collection and analysis. ○ Completed guidance on case and contact management without laboratory testing.

Partner Agency Updates

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<p><i>General</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Australia’s Foreign Minister has approved 13 new projects under the Health Security Initiative for the Indo-Pacific Region to strengthen infectious disease detection and response, 10 of which have geographic focus on Pacific Island countries, Timor-Leste and/or PNG. These projects, led largely by Australia’s premier health and education institutions, are being adapted for COVID-19 response. ○ Australia is providing bilateral support for COVID-19 preparedness in Fiji, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Based on these requests, this will include information, education and communication materials, technical support, PPE for healthcare worker protection, prefabricated modular units for quarantine purposes, hygiene kits, testing kits, and other medical supplies including ICU equipment and consumables.

<i>Case Management (Quarantine / Isolation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT provided assistance and funding to support quarantine management in PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. DFAT providing bilateral assistance to Solomon Islands to help establish a temporary quarantine facility using prefabricated modular units near Henderson International Airport.
<i>Laboratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT has pledged funding towards joint WHO/DFAT/MFAT procurement of GeneXpert cartridges and machines to enable in-country testing across the Pacific. Activities to strengthen laboratory capacity in PNG and Timor-Leste are being undertaken as part of the suite of 13 new projects under the Health Security Initiative for the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen infectious disease detection and response.
<i>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT is funding risk communication activities in the Pacific region, including health information, education and community awareness materials in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.
<i>Supplies and Logistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT is providing supply and logistics, including PPE, medical equipment and consumables, infrastructure and logistics personnel through bilateral support to Fiji, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu.

International Federation of the Red Cross Red Crescent

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting the 11 National Societies to develop Emergency Plan of Actions (EPOA) and budgets for the APPEAL Funding.
<i>Surveillance and Epidemiology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Cross staff to provide support for contact tracing in Fiji.

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Zealand has provided NZ\$1 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO DPS, Fiji) to support their 'Pacific Action Plan for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Preparedness and Response' In partnership with WHO, New Zealand deployed teams to Cook Islands and Niue to support COVID-19 preparedness. New Zealand's Ministry of Health is also providing remote technical advice to Tokelau, Niue and Cook Islands.
<i>Laboratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Zealand Government has an agreement with the Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd (ESR) for Covid-19 confirmation testing that allows countries in the South Pacific to have potential Covid-19 cases tested in Auckland free of charge. Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tonga have utilised New Zealand's ESR laboratory for COVID-19 testing. New Zealand is supporting WHO-led procurement of essential laboratory supplies for Pacific countries to undertake COVID-19 testing

<i>Supplies and Logistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Zealand Ministry of Health has provided a letter requesting that New Zealand suppliers assist in supplying PPE to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) for the Pacific. ○ New Zealand has provided a basic package of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga
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The Pacific Community (SPC)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducted COVID-19 orientation for staff of Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
<i>Case Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised webinar for the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine on COVID-19 for managing. ○ Held consultations with clinician pathologists on funeral advisory for “Care of the Dead related to Covid-19” aligned with WHO guidance.
<i>Health Service Delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported preventative maintenance of anaesthetic machines and biochemistry analysers as part of Samoa’s COVID-19 preparedness. ○ SPC developed and distributed information materials on hand washing, droplet and contact precautions, protective measures, paediatric admissions, management of COVID-19 in emergency departments, and ICU guidelines.
<i>Laboratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provided advice to PICs regarding applicability of other COVID-19 tests (FDA and non-FDA approved equipment) that are available in the market and those that are to be received as donation to countries. ○ Provide Fiji CDC technical advice regarding purchase of additional RTPCR reagents, consumables and Lab PPE.
<i>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported production and provincial distribution of COVID-19 Bislama posters in Vanuatu. ○ Supported FSM for the development of new risk communication information products and adaptation of existing posters to local languages.

United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinating community engagement training for COVID-19 prevention and preparedness in Vanuatu for front-line health workers and community mobilisers. ○ Deployed specialists to support the Vanuatu Health Emergency Operations Centre and the Risk Communication Committee. ○ In Solomon Islands, UNICEF is providing technical support for the development of risk communication materials for markets, the transport sector and other public entities. ○ UNICEF in collaboration with Mobile Network Operators is establishing a Coronavirus Information Hub to disseminate accurate information on COVID-19 and to enable automated response to health queries.
<i>Addressing Primary Impacts (Health / Nutrition and WASH)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Vanuatu, supported the government in installing 87 hand washing stations at election polls & setting up of hand washing facilities in communities & health clinics. ○ Working with the MoH in Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati Cook Islands to define the list of health supplies (including PPEs and biomedical items) that will be procured through ADB funding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provided additional two tents to Fiji to serve as fever clinics and one tent to Solomon Islands as triage facility at the national referral hospital.
<i>Addressing Secondary Impacts (Education, Child Protection and ECD)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Vanuatu, UNICEF provided technical support to the Gender & Protection Cluster for the development of the COVID-19 preparedness and responses plan. ○ Disseminated guidance on parenting in the time of COVID-19 and sent invitations for a webinar on 'COVID-19 and Child Protection in East Asia and the Pacific' on the 2nd April 2020, to government officials (PS/CEO of social welfare ministries, Directors and senior social welfare officers) of 14 PICTs

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting the adaptation of multisector service SOPs and referral pathways to ensure safe, accessible and coordinated gender-based violence (GBV) counselling and referral during the COVID period. ○ Providing technical and financial support to GBV counselling and prevention services for women and girls in Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu, including Support transition to tech safe mobile counselling, on-line counselling with our existing frontline service provider partners ○ Support technical content for on-line training tools and capacity on psychosocial support, handling disclosures, GBV and COVID-19 Response among frontline service providers, in coordination with national response plans.

World Bank Group (WB)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently processing requests from Fiji, PNG, Samoa and Solomon Islands to access the WB Fast Track COVID-19 Facility (FTCF) and will be prepared as new Investment Project Financing (IPF). ○ Supporting Vanuatu to re-structure its catastrophe differed drawdown option (Cat-DDO) for COVID-19 ○ Increased allocation to Solomon Islands' Development Policy Operation

World Food Programme (WFP)

Area of Support	Description of Assistance
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WFP continues monitoring of sea freight supply chains and activities in the Pacific region ○ WFP is engaging with service providers and WFP Aviation Service in Rome for potential air charters. ○ WFP is consolidating cargo requirements for all agencies. ○ Together with the JIMT, WFP drafted an operational strategy that countries and territories can adapt for their COVID-19 emergency telecommunications preparedness and response, including implementing a short code hotline and/or a call centre to facilitate public interaction with health authorities.