To support Pacific COVID-19 preparedness and response, humanitarian and development partners have established a Joint Incident Management Team (IMT). Coordinated by WHO’s Division of Pacific Technical Support (DPS), this Joint IMT includes the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Pacific Community (SPC), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Through this IMT, ongoing coordination is occurring with Ministries of Health across the Pacific, as well as with key partner, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Office of Migration (IOM), Pacific Island Health Officers’ (PIHOA) and United States Centre for Communicable Diseases (US CDC).

Global situation overview
As of WHO Situation Report #23, dated 12 February 2020, there are 45,171 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of this, 44,730 confirmed cases have been identified in China; and 441 confirmed cases have been identified outside China, in 24 countries.

For latest WHO global updates on COVID-19, please refer to:
- WHO COVID-Situation Reports
- Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation dashboard

Pacific COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Overview
As of 13 February 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in any Pacific Island country or area (PICs).

Key achievements:
- Development and implementation of a six-month Pacific Action Plan for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response, with a corresponding monitoring and evaluation framework. DFAT and MFAT have co-funded the Plan to an approximate total of USD 1.3 million (DFAT: AUD 1 million; MFAT: NZD 1 million).
- As of 13 February 2020, 90 requests for assistance have been received from 16 PICs. To date, 61 requests have been addressed and completed.
- Deployment of 11 technical specialists to 6 PICs, to support in a range of technical and operational areas including infection prevention and control, case management, points of entry measures and surveillance/epidemiology.
- Bulk procurement for Pacific regional stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE), with stocks currently in transit to the Pacific.
- Close coordination with humanitarian and development partners, including twice-weekly coordination meetings and a weekly situation report (sitrep), to leverage networks and resources for improved country support.

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

In addition to responding to country requests for support/assistance, the following priority actions for Pacific preparedness and response have been identified:

- Procurement and storage of additional PPE and laboratory supplies, and dispatch of these supplies to all PICs with current stock-outs of critical items.
- Additional human resource deployments to PICs in a range of technical and operational fields, including case management, IPC, surveillance, and risk communication.
- Development of a regional risk communication package for PICs to adapt and implement at the national level.
- Reviewing and adapting global guidance for implementation by PICs, including contextualising to country and regional public health capacities.

**COVID-19 Technical Deployments to PICs**

**Table 1: List of Current, Completed, and Planned Deployments of technical support to PICs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current and Completed Deployments</th>
<th>Planned Deployments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Federated States of Micronesia (10-14 February)</td>
<td>• Federated States of Micronesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kiribati (9-13 February)</td>
<td>• Kiribati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Solomon Islands (3-12 February) and (10-24 Feb)</td>
<td>• Nauru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Palau (3-7 February)</td>
<td>• Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tonga (5-7 February)</td>
<td>• Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tuvalu (11-14 February)</td>
<td>• Vanuatu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A joint action tracker has been established to map and coordinate country requests for support related to COVID-19 preparedness. An overview of requests is presented below.

**Requests by Category**

In addition to managing a range of requests, the Joint IMT is also reaching out proactively to offer timely support and technical guidance in a range of areas.
Table 2. Areas of technical support provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Area</th>
<th>Support Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Laboratory                      | • Supporting PICS to address laboratory supply needs, and develop and dispatch basic initial laboratory supply packages.  
• Developed written guide for the collection, packaging, and shipment of COVID-19 specimens for PICs.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Supplies and Logistics          | • Worked with suppliers to develop and dispatch an initial basic package of personal protective equipment (PPE).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Risk Communications             | • WHO has provided risk communication support to 15 PICs, including assisting with developing risk communication preparedness and response plans, messaging and product development for targeted audiences and community outreach initiatives.  
• Deployment of risk communication specialists to two PICs, with future deployments scheduled.  
• WHO and UNICEF have supported the production, printing and financing risk communication materials and dissemination for six PICs.  
• WHO, in collaboration with partners, is working to develop a Pacific regional package of risk communication products and materials that can be adapted for country utilisation.                                                                 |
| Infection Prevention and Control| • Supported four countries to identify appropriate isolation and quarantine facilities.  
• IPC protocols being reviewed in three countries, with training and simulation exercises on the appropriate use of PPE being conducted.                                                                                                                                               |
| Point of Entry                  | • WHO has provided support in reviewing travel advisories for six countries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Case Management                 | • Supported the development of case management protocols for six countries.  
• Case management training has been conducted in three countries.  
• Isolation and quarantine facilities are being identified and prepared.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Surveillance                    | • WHO has been reinforcing surveillance practices at sentinel sites and strengthening surveillance for severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) in 4 countries.                                                                                                           |
Table 3. COVID-19 testing capacity in the Pacific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Laboratory</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Australia</td>
<td>Victorian Infectious Disease Reference Laboratory (VIDRL)</td>
<td>Currently providing test free of charge for outbreak confirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahiti, French Polynesia</td>
<td>Institut Louis Malarde (ILM)</td>
<td>No specimen testing on weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noumea, New Caledonia</td>
<td>Medipole</td>
<td>Charge not exceeding 15000XPF per test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland, New Zealand</td>
<td>ESR</td>
<td>Charge not exceeding NZD125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partner Updates:**

WHO is working in close collaboration with to ensure a coordinated response to COVID-19 (listed alphabetically):

**Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**
- Funding to support implementation of the *Pacific Action Plan for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Preparedness and Response* as part of a broader strategy of support for COVID-19 preparedness and outbreak in the Pacific Islands, PNG and Timor-Leste. The plan has three parts: outbreak preparedness; outbreak response; and medium to long-term capacity building. This plan includes a budget for emergency funding to respond to urgent requests for technical and financial assistance.
- DFAT official currently embedded in the Joint IMT in Suva. An additional public health physician has been deployed to Honiara to provide technical support. Further deployments are being considered including personnel from the Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) and Australia Assists.
- Mobilised specialists through the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security across several PICs to support preparedness efforts including pathology, IPC, and epidemiology. These were planned before the outbreak of COVID-19.
- PPE supplies are being sourced through DFAT’s warehouse to supplement current procurement efforts by WHO and UNICEF.

**International Federation for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**
- Printing and distribution of health promotion material, focusing on hand hygiene, appropriate use of PPE, and cough etiquette.
- Undertaking translation of printed resources into different vernacular for some non-English speaking communities.

**International Organization for Migration (IOM)**
- In the Federated States of Micronesia, close coordination with State and National government counterparts and UNICEF, supporting hygiene promotion, community outreach and awareness activities.
- Implementing WASH interventions, with a focus on installation of handwashing facilities at public education facilities and soap distribution.

**New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)**
- Deployment of MFAT representative to join the Pacific Joint IMT in Suva.
- Investigating available PPE supplies in New Zealand for potential distribution to PICs through Pacific regional stockpile.
- Establishing contingency plans for future deployment of additional human resources and supplies to address priority needs in PICs.

**The Pacific Community (SPC)**
- Working to support COVID-19 laboratory testing in key referral laboratories (See Table 3).
- Verifying PICs specimen packing and transport capacities and providing guidance and funding for processing and shipping samples.
- Identifying minimum package of laboratory supplies needed for countries in collaboration with WHO.

**Pacific Island Health Officers’ Association (PIHOA)**
- Facilitating country requests for laboratory supplies.
- Facilitating laboratory support to the USAPIs.

**UNICEF**
- Providing joint technical support with WHO to the National Taskforces of the FSM, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.
- Developing, adapting and printing arrival forms and information, education, and communication materials in Kiribati, FSM, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.
- Deploying communication specialists to Kiribati and FSM.
- Providing tents for isolation purposes.
- Supporting community awareness campaigns in FSM for handwashing, hygiene, and respiratory etiquette in collaboration with IOM, Red Cross, US Navy and Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC).

**United States Centres for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC)**
- Finalising coordination arrangements with WHO for the Joint IMT.
- Hawaii State Laboratory being identified and calibrated to be a referral laboratory for COVID-19 testing in the North Pacific.
- Changes made to increase flexibility of health emergency preparedness grants for COVID-19.
- Working to operationalise the laboratory in Guam.