

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Papua New Guinea Situation Report 10



25 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 **29 countries** affected by COVID-19 as of 24 February. It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases. There have been **23 deaths reported outside of China**.
- ❑ On 25 February, the '**Inter-sectoral Coordination Taskforce**' (ICTF) for COVID-19 convened the 2nd meeting and discussed the implementation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (ERP) COVID-19 in PNG.
- ❑ On 24 February, the staffs at the Jackson International Airport (Point of Entry) were trained on the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for screening the travellers on arrival by an IPC expert from WHO.
- ❑ As of 24 February, a total of **16,580 persons were screened** at the **different point of entries** (airport/seaport). The health team has identified 362 'Persons of interest' and are being monitored regularly by the Surveillance Team. There have been **eight persons investigated** by the rapid response team (6 travellers and 2 contacts). **Seven samples were tested in the laboratory, five were negative** for coronavirus, and two samples are undergoing test.
- ❑ The PNG Government has provided funds to implement the **ERP for COVID-19**: PGK 3.3 million from the NDoH while the Department of Treasury has approved for release PGK 10 million.
- ❑ The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) continues to coordinate national preparedness measures and conducts daily operations meetings. Provinces have also activated their provincial EOCs (PEOCs) and have preparedness measures in place.
- ❑ NEOC **designated four Regional Coordinators to liaise with the PEOCs** on ERPs and facilitate the provinces in preparing for surveillance and response to COVID-19, and also to ensure timely support.
- ❑ Heightened surveillance is implemented -- using multiple sources: coronavirus **hotline +675 71960813**, points of entry screening, event-based and syndromic surveillance systems.

GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(The numbers are based on WHO Situation Report as of 24 February 2020. The figures change very quickly.)

Globally: 79,331 confirmed

**China: 77,262 confirmed
2,595 deaths**

Outside China:

2,069 confirmed

23 deaths (*Philippines, Japan, France, Republic of Korea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy and International conveyance – Diamond Princess*)

29 countries

(Australia, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA, Viet Nam)

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

- ❑ A declaration (based on Quarantine Act, 1953 and Public Health Act, 1973) 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** was issued on February 14 by the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong.

- ❑ The traveler, prior to entry into PNG, has to show evidence of an entry stamp showing more than 14 consecutive days outside of the designated region.

- ❑ On 19 February, the NDoH and stakeholders implemented NEC Decision 20/2020 to form the **ICTF for COVID-19**, chaired by the Acting Deputy Secretary for National Health Services Standards to oversee overall implementation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (ERP) COVID-19 in PNG. The taskforce comprises of one focal person from all relevant stakeholders.

- ❑ The **ICTF** forms the **Secretariat** to the **Ministerial Committee** on COVID-19.

- ❑ On 25 February, the **ICTF for COVID-19** convened the **2nd meeting** and discussed the implementation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (ERP) COVID-19 in PNG.

- ❑ 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**.

- ❑ A Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus has been established to coordinate response. Some members of the Committee observed the airport screening on 14 February 2020.

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

ICTF for COVID-19 established by NEC Decision 20/2020 Composition

Chairperson: A/Deputy Secretary, NHSS

Members:

- ❑ EM, Public Health
- ❑ EM, MS
- ❑ EM, SPD
- ❑ Manger, Disease Control
- ❑ Manager, Health Promotion
- ❑ IMR
- ❑ Representative of Departments of Treasury (1), Finance (1), Immigration and Citizenship Authority (1), National Airports Corporation (1), Air Niugini (1), PNG Ports (1), NAQIA (1), Customs (1), Transport and Infrastructure (1), Tourism Authority (1), ICT (1), PNG DF (1) and RPNGC (1)
- ❑ Representatives of DPs – WHO, UNICEF, DFAT, MFAT, MSF
- ❑ First Secretary, Ministry of Health and HIV/AIDS
- ❑ Representatives from all private hospitals and clinics

- ❑ The NEOC continues to meet daily since its activation on 27 January 2020. The cluster leads have been identified based on the incident management system used in previous outbreaks and emergencies.
- ❑ The NEOC has daily meeting at 8:30 AM, followed by the ICTF for COVID-19 every Tuesdays.
- ❑ Provincial Health Authorities have activated their PEOCs and have started preparations.
- ❑ NEOC designated **four Regional Coordinators** to liaise with the PEOCs on ERPs and facilitate the provinces in preparing for surveillance and response to COVID-19, and also to ensure timely support [for details, refer Section 'Updates from Regional Clusters'].
- ❑ 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

2nd Meeting of the Inter-sectoral Coordination Taskforce (ICTF) for COVID-19



Points of Entry (POE)

- ❑ Health screening at Jacksons International Airport and at seaports continues. Measures in place starting 28 January 2020:
 - In-flight airline announcement and advisory to passengers.
 - Mandatory completion of Health Declaration Forms by all the travellers.
 - A Health Desk is operational at the Jacksons International Airport and seaports
 - Health screening completed before Immigrations and Customs clearance to check travellers with history of travel to China.
 - Protocol for isolation and quarantine of 'People under investigation (PUI)' is developed.
 - Advisory to airlines operators for measures in case a passenger gets sick on board an aircraft.



Training on IPC at Jacksons Airport

- ❑ On 24 February, the staffs at the Jackson International Airport (Point of Entry) were trained on the IPC for screening the travellers on arrival by an IPC expert from WHO.

❑ **Consolidated information from Point of Entries (airport/seaport) as of 24 February 2020.**

Point of Entry	No of flights/vessels screened	No of inbound Passengers Screened	No of People Referred to Surveillance/RRT	Notes
Jacksons International Airport (28 Jan – 24 Feb)	256 flights (commercial and private flights)	15,823	362	10 staff assigned to airport in 6-7 daily flights
Seaports (28 Jan – 24 Feb)	36	757	0	3 Quarantine Officers assigned daily

Surveillance and Laboratory

- The surveillance system uses multiple sources such as:
 - Information from POE (analysis of health declaration forms of arriving travellers at the Jacksons International airport)
 - Calls from the coronavirus hotline **+675 71960813**
 - Event-based and syndromic surveillance systems monitored by the NDOH and Provincial Health Authorities. NDOH routine surveillance for influenza like illnesses (ILI) at sentinel sites is also ongoing.
 - Hospital and health facility reporting
- Rumour surveillance (report from anyone, any source)
- A team of trained surveillance officers (rapid response team) are mobilized to conduct case investigation and contact tracing. The National Capital District is deploying additional staff for surge capacity for rapid response.
- Conduct follow-up of persons who have travel history from mainland China and other countries as Persons of Interest (POI) and eliminate from the list when they complete 14 days.
- The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology laboratory is designated to test for COVID-19.
- IMR have received the COVID-19 positive controls from Germany to test any sample from PUI that is positive for pan-coronavirus.

- Consolidated information from surveillance and laboratory as of 24 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
362	162	8	7	5	2

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ On 20-21 February, the health workers at the PMGH were trained on IPC for the COVID-19 response by MSF and WHO.
- ❑ On 20 February, Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong received 300 KGs of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from WHO, which will be used by the health workers. These PPEs will be used by the health worker to care 50 patients initially during the emergency response.
- ❑ On 21 February, a simulation exercise using a dummy patient was carried out to improve the medical response in the Port Moresby General hospital by NDOH, PMGH, Saint Johns ambulance, MSF and WHO staff. These will be repeated regularly to improve operating procedures for receiving a case of COVID-19.
- ❑ On 20 February, medical team visited Exxon Mobil plant site for inspection of isolation facility and capacity.
- ❑ An isolation ward of 8 beds is available at Port Moresby General Hospital.
- ❑ St John's Ambulance has launched standard treatment guidelines and is ready to take patients with respiratory infections. A small simulation was done to test the procedure and made modifications.
- ❑ PEOCs will be assisted to replicate the set up in the provinces as per request by PHAs.
- ❑ PEOCs are requested to feedback information to NEOC.
- ❑ An advisory was provided to all health care facilities on the management of persons that meet the case definition.
- ❑ Training on PPEs for PMGH staff is continuing. Trainees include clinicians, nurses, radiology staff; and support services staff.
- ❑ The NDOH is working with private medical providers and industries. ISOS, Aspen, OK TEDI and Oil Search are to strengthen surveillance and reporting of any persons of interest.
- ❑ They have either re-routed their flights to Port Moresby to be cleared or are providing surveillance of flights as they land. The measures in place are the same as the system used by NDOH.
- ❑ **PPE supplies for the Nation are not sufficient.** Call for assistance is made for business houses, corporate entities, and our stakeholders to support.



Reviewing IPC procedures of the St John Ambulance

Communication

- Media briefing is ongoing every Friday, 10.30am.
- Sixty second radio spot has been produced and finalized in partnership with NBC Radio. Both Pidgin and English version are on air.
- Relevant officials from NDoH and WHO are scheduled for TV and Radio programs.
- On 24 February, Dr Daoni, NDoH commenced the Morning Tok program with NBC.
- On 21 February, NDoH convened media briefing. Dr Paison Dakulala, Acting Health Secretary and Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative attended the media briefing.
- Media schedule for free-to-air talkback programs has been negotiated for NBC (Morning Show, PNG Extra, Gavman Tonight), FM100 (Live simulcast with EMTV on Talkback) and EMTV (Haus & Home).
- Budget has been submitted for media adverts with complimentary spots negotiated in addition to NBC's initial production and broadcast
- A television advert script is being developed – to be produced with NBC, EMTV and TVWAN when the funds are available.
- Communications plan with budget is in place.
- Information materials on prevention messages are prepared (some in Pidgin).
- Information on how to use and dispose masks have been circulated.
- Information and communication materials on coronavirus were sent to all PHAs for use in the community mobilization activities.
- Materials will also be shared with the other ministries for use in their advocacy events.
- Advisory on the prevention measures have been disseminated to the public through the media and social media platforms.
- NBC National Press Club took place on Monday 17 February at Lamana Hotel. Acting Health Secretary, Dr Paison Dakulala and WHO Rep. Dr Dapeng Luo gave live updates simulcast on NBC TV and Radio nationwide.
- NDOH and UNICEF are working with Ministry of Education on supporting schools with materials for children. Familiarization programs have commenced.
- Briefing to UN communication officers was made on 13 February.

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.
- 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 in two Provinces in the Region: **Milne Bay and Western Province**
- ❑ **Milne Bay and Western Province:** working on fully costed ERP



SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS

From the World Health Organization

- ❑ High-level technical briefing to Government and partners on the COVID-19 situation and action:
 - Ongoing update to Health Minister Jelta Wong and A/Secretary Dr Paison Dakulala
 - Briefing to Prime Minister James Marape, along with Minister of Health and NDOH Secretary on the situation and preparedness for PNG – 29 Jan 2020
 - Briefing to the Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus – 1 Feb 2020
 - Briefing to the Diplomatic Corps and Heads of Development agencies on 30 Jan, Heads of Missions on 5 Feb, and UN Staff on 7 Feb
- ❑ 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.
 - From 24 February to 1 March, an IPC expert from WHO WPRO will be providing technical support to the relevant health workers at the Point of entries, Surveillance team and PMGH on IPC procedures.
 - On 20-21 February, the health workers at the PMGH were trained on IPC for the COVID-19 response by WHO and MSF.
 - On 20 February, Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong received 300 KGs of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from WHO, which will be used by the health workers. These PPEs will be used by the health worker to care 50 patients initially during the emergency response.
 - On 21 February, a simulation exercise using a dummy patient was carried out to improve the medical response in the Port Moresby General hospital by NDOH, PMGH, Saint Johns ambulance, MSF and WHO staff. These will be repeated regularly to improve operating procedures for receiving a case of COVID-19.
- ❑ 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.

From Other Partners

- On 20-21 February, MSF together with WHO trained the health workers at the PMGH on IPC and conducted simulation exercise using a dummy patient to improve the medical response.
- Government of New Zealand evacuated PNG students in Wuhan and putting them on quarantine.
- UNICEF will support in printing information, education and communication materials (IEC) on hand washing, especially those for children. This will be done in coordination with the Ministry of Education.
- Discussion with Australia High Commission on possible technical support.

From Private Sectors

- Moni Plus Limited donated hand-held thermal scanners and masks for the POEs and isolation ward.
- On 19 February, PNG Ports Corporation Limited donated 18 hand-held thermal scanners for POEs (seaports).
- Private sector donated thermometers and masks for the airport and isolation ward (Moni Plus Limited).

ADVISORY TO THE PUBLIC

During previous outbreaks due to other coronavirus (Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)), human to human transmission occurred through droplets, contact and fomites, suggesting that the transmission mode of the COVID-19 can be similar.

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/>

**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 Zaixhing 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
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