

Novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV

Papua New Guinea Situation Update 2



29 January 2020

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 **28 January 2020**, there are 4,593 confirmed cases globally: 4,537 from China, including Hong Kong SAR (8), Macau SAR (7) and Taipei (7).
- ❑ There are 56 confirmed cases reported **outside of China in 14 countries**: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, Viet Nam. The information received so far shows that most, but not all, of the cases in other countries have direct links to Wuhan, China.
- ❑ Although it is clear that **human-to-human transmission is taking place**, there is need to know more on the efficiency of the transmission, clinical features of disease and disease severity. The source of the virus remains unknown.
- ❑ As of 29 January, 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.
- ❑ The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the National Department of Health (NDOH), with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), has drafted a **preparedness and response plan** and has systems being put in place to implement the 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.

GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(as of 28 January – numbers change quickly)

Globally: 4,593 confirmed

**China: 4,537 confirmed
6,973 suspected
976 severe
106 deaths**

**Outside China: 56 confirmed
Countries with cases: 14 countries**
(Australia, Cambodia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, Viet Nam)

Papua New Guinea has no reported case as of 29 January 2020

RISK ASSESSMENT

China: very high
Region: high
Global level: high

Papua New Guinea risk assessment is HIGH.

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

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

Coordination and Leadership

- The National Emergency Operations Center is activated starting 27 January 2020 and meets daily at 8:30 am and debriefing at 5:30 pm. The incident management system is being drafted to identify key people for the key functions.
- A preparedness and response plan is drafted and being updated based on the new information/events.
- The NDOH has allocated resources for the response activities.
- Series of meetings have been made with airport authorities, seaports and hospitals on 27-28 January 2020.
- The Prime Minister has been briefed on the preparedness measures on 29 January 2020.

**National Emergency
Operations Center
for coronavirus 2019-nCoV**

**Daily Operations Meeting
8:30 AM**

Debriefing (ad-hoc)
5:30 PM

3rd Floor, NDOH Building
AOPI Center, Port Moresby

Surveillance

- Coronavirus hotline +675 71960813 is operational 24/7 starting 24 January 2020. This serves as a mechanism to report any person who has met case definition. Reports are investigated by the surveillance team.
- Monitoring and collecting of health declaration forms of arriving passengers at the Jacksons International Airport starting 27 January 2020
- Both event-based and syndromic surveillance systems are monitored by the NDOH and Provincial Health Authorities. NDOH routine surveillance for influenza like illnesses (ILI) at sentinel sites is also ongoing. For any suspected ILI cases, nasopharyngeal swab is collected for laboratory diagnosis.
- A team of trained surveillance officers are mobilized to conduct case investigation and contact tracing.

Measures at the Points of Entry

- The Jacksons International Airport is the priority point of entry under monitoring. Some of the measures in place are starting 28 January 2020.
 - Providing advisory to all arriving passengers through the airline announcement.
 - Screening and filling up of health declaration forms of all arriving passengers.
 - Screening of passengers and requiring medical clearance before they board the aircraft in Hong Kong, Singapore and Manila.
 - A Health Desk is operational at the Jacksons International Airport. Health staff are positioned as soon as passengers disembark (before Customs) and they also check travellers with history of travel to Wuhan, China.
 - Protocol for isolation and quarantine of patients is being drafted.
 - Advisory to airlines operators for measures in case a passenger gets sick on board an aircraft.
- Health inspections and quarantine arrangements will be made for seaports following existing protocol for inspecting arriving vessels.

Clinical Management

- An isolation area (around 5 beds at Port Moresby General Hospital) 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.
- St John's Ambulance has been contracted and on standby to transport any sick passenger to the designated area.
- Medical response plan is drafted to assist point of entry surveillance, clinical assessment and care of sick patients.
- Pathway for patient movement from the airport and area for safe patient assessment and care is in place

Infection Prevention and Control

- An advisory will be provided to all health care facilities on the management of persons that meet the case definition.
- An orientation/training to the health care workers on infection prevention and control will be planned this week.

Laboratory Testing

- The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology laboratory is designated to test for novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). It is the designated laboratory for influenza.

Risk Communication

- Advisory on the prevention measures have been disseminated to the public through the media and social media platforms.
- Measures are ongoing to counter rumors, speculations, public anxiety, misinformation and proliferation of fake news – some influenced by social media reports from other countries and others due to “perceived” slow response in the country.
- Discussion with mobile companies will be made for text blasting of messages.
- Media conference will be made on 30 January 2020.

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 2019-nCoV 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 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.

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/>

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