

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Papua New Guinea Situation Report 6



11 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

- ❑ On 11 February, WHO announced that coronavirus disease 2019 (**COVID-19**) is the new name of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The name was developed based on the agreed guidelines between WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to find a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounceable and related to the disease. The name prevents the use of other names that can be inaccurate or stigmatizing.
- ❑ Papua New Guinea has **no case of COVID-19**, to date.
- ❑ Globally, there are **24 countries** affected by COVID-19 as of 10 February. It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases.
- ❑ A **Preparedness and Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019** was submitted to the National Executive Council (NEC) for approval and funding.
- ❑ The Government of Papua New Guinea has mobilized a **Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus** involving relevant agencies. The Committee is **chaired by the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS**.
- ❑ **Preparedness measures** have been implemented both at the national and provincial levels. The National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) has been activated since 27 January.
- ❑ A circular was sent to **Provincial Health Authorities (PHAs)** to enhance preparedness, conduct screening in those with points of entry, activate the Provincial EOCs, prepare health facilities and train health workers to identify and manage cases.
- ❑ Coronavirus **hotline +675 71960813** continues to be operational 24/7 starting 24 January 2020. The hotline receives an average of 20 calls a day, mostly asking for information and self-reporting of sick people.
- ❑ Donations of thermometers and face masks were received from the **private sector** (Moni Plus Limited) for use at the airport and isolation ward.

GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(The numbers are based on WHO Situation Report as of 11 February 2020. The figures change very quickly.)

Globally: 43,103 confirmed

China: 42,708 confirmed
7,333 severe
1,017 deaths

Outside China:

395 confirmed
1 death (Philippines)
24 countries

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

Papua New Guinea has no reported case as of 11 February 2020

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

- ❑ A preparedness and response plan is developed and budgeted and submitted to NEC.
- ❑ A Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus is in place to coordinate response.
- ❑ Representatives of the Intergovernmental Coordination Team met on 7 February to liaise on the various advisories issued by the various agencies and clarify the measures in place. Representatives came from:
 - National Department of Health
 - Department of Transport
 - National Airports Corporation (NAC)
 - National Animal Quarantine Inspection Services
 - National Disaster Centre
 - PNG Customs
 - PNG Immigration & Citizenship Authority
 - PNG Ports Corporation Limited (PNG Ports)
- ❑ NDOH is providing advice, guidance and support through the following:
 - Weekly airport stakeholders meeting, led by NAC (since 23 January 2020)
 - Weekly seaport stakeholders meeting, led by PNG Ports (since 28 January 2020)
- ❑ 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 system used in previous outbreaks and emergencies.

Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus organized 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

National Emergency Operations Center for COVID-19
Daily Operations Meeting (for Cluster Leads and WHO technical counterparts only) ❑ 8:30 – 9:00 AM
Every Wednesday: Intergovernmental Coordination Team ❑ 10:00 – 12:00 AM
Every Friday: All Partners' Meeting on Coronavirus ❑ 10:00 – 12:00 AM

- ❑ The EOC has daily meeting at 8:30 AM; followed by the Intergovernmental Coordination Team Meeting every Wednesday and with all partners every Friday.
- ❑ An advisory has been sent to the provinces to re-activate their provincial EOCs and incident management system, prepare the hospitals and other health facilities and train health workers to manage patients.
- ❑ Color-coded scenarios and appropriate scale of response had been developed for PNG as basis for the preparedness and response planning.

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. The hotline receives an average of 20 calls per day (spikes of calls are recorded when there is a key issue at the public). Telecom companies are requested to provide toll-free numbers so public can call with no cost for the caller.
- ❑ Collection and analysis of health declaration forms of arriving passengers at the Jacksons International Airport ongoing.
- ❑ 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 (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.

Measures at the Points of Entry

- ❑ The health screening at Jacksons International Airport continues: Some of the measures in place are starting 28 January 2020.
 - Providing advisory to all arriving passengers through the airline announcement.
 - Requiring all inbound passengers to fill out mandatory health declaration forms.
 - 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 China.
 - Protocol for isolation and quarantine of patients is developed.
 - Advisory to airlines operators for measures in case a passenger gets sick on board an aircraft.
 - Roster of 6-7 NDOH staff currently on rotational arrangement to screen international flights. Over 600 passengers per day are screened and declaration forms are processed by the surveillance team using an algorithm for decision and action.
 - To date, around 10 passengers have been referred to rapid response team for action and home follow ups.
- ❑ To date, the health screening at Jacksons International Airport has generated the following:
 - An average of 7-9 flights are screened every day
 - Since the start of the operation, 98 flights have been screened, with about 6,492 inbound passengers.
- ❑ On 29 January, the Foreign Affairs and International Trade has established a health desk for people affected by the outbreak. The email address is helpdesk.dfait@gmail.com and the phone numbers are: 3014131 and 3014115.
- ❑ On 3 February, Ministry of Immigration and Border Security issued public notices regarding entry to Papua New Guinea for those with travel history to China and refusal of entry at all shipping ports except Motukea, Lae Main Wharf and the Rabaul Wharf
- ❑ On 5 February, the Department of Transport issued a direction and notice to all international ship and port facility and facilities serving international vessels
- ❑ On 7 February, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade issued a media release updating the public of the status of PNG students evacuated from Wuhan, China by the New Zealand Government and the PNG citizens currently in China.

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control

- An isolation ward (8 beds now that can be expanded to accommodate more) at PMGH is being prepared as the designated ward for confirmed cases who are severely ill. Anyone suspected of the COVID-19 will be isolated as soon as detected at Jacksons International Airport.
- Provincial EOCs will be assisted to replicate the set up in the provinces as per request by PHAs.
- St John's Ambulance has launched standard treatment guidelines and are ready to take patients with respiratory infections.
- 35 PMGH staff have been trained on PPEs. Trainees include clinicians, nurses, radiology staff; and support services staff.
- An advisory will be provided to all health care facilities on the management of persons that meet the case definition.
- PPE supplies are not sufficient.** Call for assistance is made for business houses, corporate entities, and our stakeholders to support.

Laboratory

- The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology laboratory is designated to test for COVID-19. It is the National Influenza Centre.
- Viral RNA extraction test kits already provided to IMR.
- Five samples have been collected from persons under investigation (PUI) for pan-coronavirus testing.
 - The first three samples from PUIs negative for coronavirus including MERS and SARS.
 - Two samples from PUIs are pending.
- IMR have received the Wuhan novel coronavirus positive controls from Germany and is ready to test any sample from PUI that is positive for pan-coronavirus.

Risk Communication

- Electronic versions of the Information materials on coronavirus were sent to all PHAs for use in the community mobilization activities.
- Media conference for this week still to be confirmed. To date, the following conferences/orientations were held:
 - 30 January 2020, by NDOH A/Secretary and WHO Representative.
 - 3 February 2020, media orientation was to clarify terminologies used in reporting and get support in allaying people's fears
 - 7 February 2020, by NDOH A/Secretary and WHO Representative
- Advisory on the prevention measures have been disseminated to the public through the media and social media platforms.
- To cater to the requests of schools for information materials, UNICEF will link with Ministry of Education and will be asked to support in adapting WHO infographics and messages for children and schools.
- A radio spot is being prepared for use in awareness activities.

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 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)

From Other Partners

- 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.
- 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 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/>

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste



Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and running water when hands are **visibly dirty**



If your **hands are not visibly dirty**, frequently clean them by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



**PNG National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC)
Preparedness and Response for Coronavirus: 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 Anup Gurung Mobile: +675 71009914 Email: gurunga@who.int
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