

# Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Papua New Guinea Situation Report 8



18 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 **25 countries** affected by COVID-19 as of 17 February. It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases. There have been **three deaths reported outside of China**, first in the Philippines, second in Japan and third in France.
- ❑ On February 14, the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong issued 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**.
- ❑ The PNG Government has provided funds to implement the **Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019**: Kina 3.3 million from the National Department of Health while the Department of Treasury has approved for release Kina 10 million.
- ❑ The National Emergency Operations Center (EOC) continues to coordinate national preparedness measures and conducts daily operations meetings. Provinces have also activated their provincial EOCs and have preparedness measures in place.
- ❑ **Designated four (4) Regional Coordinators** as part of the NEOC to **liaise with the Provincial EOCs** to facilitate the provinces in preparing for surveillance and clinical management; and also collect updates from the provinces 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.
- ❑ As of 17 February, a total of **12,155 persons were screened** at the **different point of entries** (airport/seaport). The health team has identified 312 persons as 'Persons of interest' and are being monitored regularly by the Surveillance Team. There have been **seven persons investigated** by the rapid response team (5 travellers and 2 contacts). **Six samples were tested in the laboratory, five were negative** for coronavirus, and one sample is undergoing test.

### GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(The numbers are based on WHO Situation Report as of 17 February 2020. The figures change very quickly.)

**Globally: 71,429 confirmed**

**China: 70,635 confirmed  
1,772 deaths**

#### Outside China:

**794 confirmed  
3 deaths (Philippines, Japan and France)  
25 countries**  
(Australia, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Egypt, 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 17 February 2020**

## 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.
- ❑ Kina 3.3 million from the National Department of Health (NDOH) and Kina 10 million from the Department of Treasury have been approved for release were approved for the implementation of the **PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019**.
- ❑ A Ministerial Committee on Coronavirus is in place to coordinate response. Some members of the Committee observed the airport screening on 14 February 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.
- ❑ The EOC has daily meeting at 8:30 AM; followed by the Intergovernmental Coordination Team Meeting every Wednesday and with all partners every Friday.
- ❑ Provinces have activated their EOCs and have started preparations. Some of these provinces are: Sandaun, Eastern Highlands Province, West New Britain, East New Britain, Morobe, Milne Bay and Madang.



INDEPENDANT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

QUARANTINE ACT, 1953

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1973

NOTICE

TRAVEL RESTRICTION DUE TO COVID-19

I, **Jelta Wong**, Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, by virtue under the powers of the *Quarantine Act 1953* and of the *Public Health Act 1973*, hereby make the following declaration:

All persons entering Papua New Guinea, who have travelled to mainland China, (**the Designated Region**) since January 31, 2020, are to be denied entry, unless they have spent 14 consecutive days in a country outside of the Designated Region prior to arrival in PNG. Proof of this is to be demonstrated through evidence of an entry stamp showing more than 14 consecutive days outside of the Designated Region. These include Chinese nationals, foreigners, PNG Citizens and Permanent Residents.

Failure to comply with this direction will result in the person being returned to their original port of departure.

Signed:

Hon. Jelta Wong, MP  
Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS

Date:



14 Feb 2020

### Ministerial Committee on COVID-19 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

- ❑ Designated four (4) Regional Coordinators as part of the NEOC to liaise with the Provincial EOCs to facilitate the provinces in preparing for surveillance and clinical management; and also collect updates from the provinces to ensure timely support.
- ❑ Color-coded scenarios and appropriate scale of response had been developed for PNG as basis for the preparedness and response planning.

**National Emergency Operations Center for COVID-19**

**Daily Operations Meeting (for Cluster Leads and WHO technical counterparts)**  
❑ 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

### Points of Entry

- ❑ Health screening at Jacksons International Airport and at seaports continues. Measures in place 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 staffs 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.



Point of Entry	No of flights/vessels screened (28Jan-14Feb)	No of inbound Passengers Screened (28Jan – 17Feb)	No of People Referred to Surveillance/RRT	Notes
Jacksons International Airport (28 Jan – 17 Feb)	191 flights (commercial and private flights)	11,787	312	10 staff assigned to airport in 6-7 daily flights
Seaports (28 Jan – 17 Feb)	25	368	0	3 Quarantine Officers assigned daily

## Surveillance and Laboratory

- The surveillance system uses multiple sources such as:
  - Information from points of entry (analysis of health declaration forms of arriving passengers 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. Viral RNA extraction test kits already provided to IMR.
- IMR have received the coronavirus positive controls from Germany and is ready to test any sample from PUI that is positive for pan-coronavirus.
- Consolidated information from surveillance and laboratory as of 17 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
312	53	7	6	5	1

## Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control

- An isolation ward of 8 beds is available at Port Moresby General Hospital.
- St John's Ambulance has launched standard treatment guidelines and are ready to take patients with respiratory infections. A small simulation was done to test the procedure and made modifications.
- Provincial EOCs will be assisted to replicate the set up in the provinces as per request by PHAs.
- Provincial EOCs 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 health partners



in the extractive industry with direct flights to sites. ISOS, Aspen, OK TEDI and Oil Search are working with the NDOH Team to ensure surveillance in continuing.

- ❑ 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.

## Risk Communication

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Communications plan is in place – information materials on prevention messages are prepared (some in Pidgin).
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Briefing to UN communication officers was made on 13 February.
- ❑ Sixty second radio spot has been produced and finalized in partnership with NBC Radio, ready to air pending NBC's schedule

**Does 2019-nCoV spread through the air (e.g. through air conditioning or via e-cigarette emissions)?**

Current evidence suggests the new coronavirus spreads primarily through close contact with an infected person or the droplets released when they cough or sneeze. These released droplets typically travel less than a meter and do not hang in the air but can settle on surfaces. This is why it is important to wash hands and cover coughs.



World Health Organization  
Western Pacific Region

COVID-19

**Can the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) survive in hot and humid climates?**

Yes, 2019-nCoV has spread to countries with both hot and humid climates, as well as cold and dry. Wherever you live, whatever the climate it is important to follow precautions. Wash your hands frequently and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a bent elbow. Throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands immediately afterwards.



World Health Organization  
Western Pacific Region

COVID-19

## 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.
- ❑ 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 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	<b>Dr Daoni Esorom</b> (Incident Manager and National Coordinator) Mobile: +675 72313983 Email: <a href="mailto:daoniesorom@gmail.com">daoniesorom@gmail.com</a>	<b>Dr Zhang Zaixhing</b> Mobile: +675 74763392 Email: <a href="mailto:zhangz@who.int">zhangz@who.int</a>
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Regional Coordinator (New Guinea Islands Region)	<b>Dr Melinda Susapu</b> Mobile: 72956646 Email: <a href="mailto:msusapu@gmail.com">msusapu@gmail.com</a>	
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