HIGHLIGHTS

- Papua New Guinea has no case of COVID-19, to date.

- **Globally**, there are 51 countries affected by COVID-19 as of 28 February. It is likely that more countries will be reporting cases. There have been 67 deaths reported outside of China.

- As of 27 February, a total of 17,518 persons were screened at the Jacksons International Airport. The health team has identified 510 ‘persons of interest’ and are being monitored regularly by the surveillance team.

- There have been nine persons investigated by the rapid response team. Samples were collected from seven persons, all tested negative for coronavirus. The other two persons did not meet the case definition.

- On 28 February, A/Secretary of Health Dr Paison Dakulala received 15 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items (750kg) worth of AUD66,244.25 from Australian High Commission in PNG, which will be used by the health workers.

- Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have now completed quarantine at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has returned to Port Moresby on 25 February.

- The PNG Government has provided funds to implement the **PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19**: PGK 3.3 million from the NDoH while the Department of Treasury has released PGK 10 million.

- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) continues to coordinate national preparedness measures and conducts daily operations meetings. Provincial EOCs have been activated are making preparedness and response plans. A readiness checklist is being prepared for provinces to support in the mapping of resources and gaps.

GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(These numbers are based on WHO Situation Report as of 28 February 2020. The figures change very quickly.)

- **Globally**: 83,652 confirmed
- **China**: 78,961 confirmed (2,791 deaths)

- **Outside China**:
  - 4,691 confirmed
  - 67 deaths
  - 51 countries

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**Papua New Guinea has no reported case as of 28 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

- The PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 is being updated to modify scenarios based on the evolving situation. The revised plan will be circulated next week. Color-coded scenarios and appropriate scale of response had been developed for PNG as basis for the preparedness and response planning.

- 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.

- The Ministerial Committee on COVID-19, chaired by Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS provides the strategic leadership and guidance to the preparedness and response. (The membership of the Ministerial Committee is listed as an annex to this report.)

- The Intersectoral Coordination Task Force (ICTF) on COVID-19, chaired by the Acting Deputy Secretary for National Health Services Standards meets weekly to coordinate overall implementation of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 in PNG. The taskforce comprises of one focal person from all relevant stakeholders. The last meeting of the ICTF was held on 25 February. (The membership of the ICTF is listed as an annex to this report.)

- To manage day-to-day operations, 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. (The membership of the NEOC is listed as an annex to this report.)

- Provincial Health Authorities have activated their PEOCs and have started preparations. NEOC designated four Regional Coordinators to liaise with the PEOCs on to support provinces in preparing for response to COVID-19, and also to ensure timely support [for details, refer Section ‘Updates from Regional Clusters’].

- The declaration 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 issued on February 14 by the Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong is still in effect.

- Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have now completed quarantine at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has returned to Port Moresby on 25 February.
Points of Entry (POE)

- Health screening at Jacksons International Airport and at seaports continues.

Consolidated information from Point of Entries (airport/seaport) as of 27 February 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of Entry</th>
<th>No of flights/vessels screened</th>
<th>No of inbound Passengers/travellers Screened</th>
<th>No of People Referred to Surveillance/RRT</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacksons International Airport (28 Jan – 27 Feb)</td>
<td>287 (commercial and private flights)</td>
<td>17,518</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>10 staff assigned to airport in 6-7 daily flights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaports (Port Moresby) (excluding provincial data) (28 Jan – 27 Feb)</td>
<td>Updated data on seaports will be included in the next Situation Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-5 Quarantine Officers assigned daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surveillance and Laboratory

- The surveillance system uses multiple sources of information and has a team of trained surveillance officers (rapid response team) that have been mobilized to conduct case investigation and contact tracing.
- The PNG Institute of Medical Research (PNG IMR) virology laboratory is designated laboratory to test for COVID-19 in PNG.

Consolidated information from surveillance and laboratory as of 27 February 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons of interest (travel history)</th>
<th>Persons cleared completing 14-days self-quarantine</th>
<th>Persons under investigation (monitored)</th>
<th>Samples sent to Laboratory</th>
<th>Negative Result</th>
<th>Pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>9 (7 samples collected; 2 did not meet case definition)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control

- An isolation ward of 8 beds continues to be prepared at Port Moresby General Hospital.
- 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.
- The NDOH is working with private medical providers and industries by providing guidelines on case management and infection prevention and control.
- **The issue of PPE supplies for the nation remain to be a concern.** The call for assistance from business houses, corporate entities, and our stakeholders to support still exists.

### Communication and Community Engagement

- Communications plan is in place – according to color-coded scenario.
- Community guidance for social mobilizers and volunteers is developed (attached to this report).
- Regular media briefing is conducted. Next media briefing is on Monday, 2 March 2020
- Radio spots on prevention messages continue to air on NBC.
- Information materials on prevention messages are prepared (some in Pidgin), sent to provinces.
- Risk communication materials for health workers and health facilities developed and shared with provinces and partners.
- NDOH and UNICEF are working with Ministry of Education on supporting schools with materials for children. Familiarization programs have commenced.
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 for COVID-19 in three Provinces in the Region: Milne Bay, Western Province and Oro
- Completed ERP with costing: Milne Bay, Western Province and Central Province.

SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS

From the World Health Organization

- High-level technical briefing to Government and partners on the COVID-19 situation and action:
- 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)
Briefed UN Staff on COVID-19 and facilitated to develop UN Preparedness and Contingency Plan for COVID-19.

Donation 300 KG of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which will be used by the health workers to care for 50 patients initially during the emergency response.

From Other Partners

- Australia assisted one PNG student (alongside 7 Ni-Vanuatu students) to depart Wuhan, arriving in Darwin on 9 February. They have now completed quarantine at Howard Springs in Australia, and the PNG student has returned to Port Moresby on 25 February.
- On 28 February, A/Secretary of Health Dr Paison Dakulala received 15 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items (750kg) worth of AUD66,244.25 from Australian High Commission in PNG, which will be used by the health workers.

ADVISORY TO THE PUBLIC

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/
ANNEX 1: Coordination Mechanisms for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Papua New Guinea

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

Intersectoral Coordination Task Force on COVID-19
(Established by National Executive Council Decision 20/2020)

Chairperson: A/Deputy Secretary, National Health Services Standards Dr Sibauk Bieb

Members:
- Executive Manager, Medical Standards
- Executive Manager, Public Health
- Executive Manager, Strategic Policy
- Manager, Disease Control
- Manager, Health Promotion
- First Secretary, Ministry of Health and HIV/AIDS
- Institute of Medical Research
- Representatives of DPs:
  - World Health Organization (WHO)
  - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
  - Australian High Commission
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), New Zealand
  - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- Representatives from all private hospitals and clinics
- Representatives from:
  - Department of Treasury
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Immigration and Citizenship Authority
  - Department of Transport and Infrastructure
  - National Airports Corporation
  - Air Niugini
  - PNG Ports
  - National Agriculture and Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA)
  - PNG Customs Service
  - PNG Tourism Promotion Authority
  - Information Communication and Technology
  - PNG Defence Force (PNGDF)
  - Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC)
## Preparedness and Response for Coronavirus Disease: Cluster Leaders and Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>NDOH Cluster Lead</th>
<th>WHO Technical Counterpart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident management</td>
<td>Dr Daoni Esorom (Incident Manager and National Coordinator)</td>
<td>Dr Zhang Zaixing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surveillance, rapid response and</td>
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<td>Ms Nola Ndrewei</td>
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<td>contact tracing</td>
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<td>Clinical management, IPC, hospital preparedness and ambulance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Points of entry (airport, seaports and land crossing)</td>
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<td>Partner Coordination</td>
<td>Dr Daoni Esorom</td>
<td>Dr Zhang Zaixing, Ms Joy Rivaca and Ms Nola NdreweI</td>
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<td>Provincial EOC Coordination</td>
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<td>Regional Coordinator (New Guinea Islands Region)</td>
<td>Dr Melinda Susapu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Coordinator (Highlands Region)</td>
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</tbody>
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