

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Situation Report – 10

Timor-Leste



Data as reported by 14 February 2020

CURRENT SITUATION

- Currently, there are **NO** cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- However, the Ministry of Health remains vigilant and ready to respond appropriately as the situation develops.

MEASURES TAKEN

Steps being taken by the government with WHO and partners' supports, to respond to the situation include:

- **Friday 14 February 2020**

- Some news reports in the past 24 hours have reported a sudden increase in the number of cases of Coronavirus Disease -2019 (COVID-19) and deaths in China. Overnight there were 14,840 cases including 13,332 clinically diagnosed cases from Hubei. This increase is in large parts due to a change in how cases are being diagnosed and reported at the country level. WHO, however, for the sake of consistency is reporting only laboratory-confirmed cases.
- WHO team met with the Diocese Baucau regarding Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19) and collaborating with the Church for community awareness on the disease and precautions that community member can take. The team also met with the Baucau municipality staff and presented on COVID-19.
- WHO Representative met with the Secretary of State for Social Communication to explore ways of collaborating to further ramp up awareness on COVID-19. The office of the Secretary of State for Social Communication has assured the use of different state-owned platforms – television, radio and online – under its purview to reinforce messaging on COVID-19 targeting the communities.
- FFDTL Lieutenant Colonel, Chief of Military Health in a meeting with WHO sought more information on COVID-19 and also requested sensitization sessions for army personnel in Dili as well as across the country. There are five more army bases in Timor-Leste where Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO will hold sensitization sessions



for army personnel. In addition, there will be tailor-made technical sensitization sessions for army doctors and health care providers.

- Two officials from WHO appeared on GMN TV's daily live show Café Kmanek to address questions on COVID-19 and dispel misconceptions and confusions about the disease and also give an update on preparedness and response. A weekly media briefing was kicked off on 14 February 2020 for COVID-19 especially. Beginning 14 February, 2020 will be weekly press briefings every Friday - addressed jointly by the MoH and WHO.

A WHO technical team presented prevention and control measures for the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, Ministry of Defence, acting Director General for Civil Protection and National Director of Disaster Management and their staff in addition to the National Directorate of Disaster Management and Fire Fighters (Bombeiros). In all, more than a hundred people attended the sensitization session.

- **Thursday 13 February 2020**

- The United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) and WHO Representative met with the His Excellency, the Prime Minister on 13 February 2020 to apprise him of the latest situation in regard to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Prime Minister's office has been requested to establish a National Task Force (NTF) to review, guide and coordinate the incident response. In addition, the need for better communication by and among Ministries was also emphasized as well as communication by the Secretariat of State for Social Communication to keep the community informed with accurate information.
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- The referral system for testing for Coronavirus at the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, Melbourne, Australia was successfully established and functional with support from the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste. The test sample from Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (FFDTL) personnel tested negative for the COVID-19.
 - The Ministry of Health convened a multisectoral meeting comprising Director Generals and National Directors from different line Ministries and the Health Cluster Team (HCT) to review the preparedness plan and also seek support from the line ministries to respond to this situation more effectively. The MoH also recommended roles and responsibilities for each Ministry to consider as and when need arises. An update on Timor-Leste's implementation progress with the International Health Regulation 2005 (IHR 2005) was also provided by WHO technical staff.

- On 12 February 2020 a video was widely shared on social media (Facebook and WhatsApp mainly) of a Chinese national collapsing in a shop in Timor Plaza. The video was shared with an accompanying message that the person was infected with COVID-19. Investigations by the Ministry of Health (MoH) concluded that the person suffered a minor stroke and did NOT have COVID-19 infection. He was admitted to a private clinic. The MoH on its Facebook page issued the same clarification.



- WHO met with the Chinese Ambassador to share updates on the preparedness and response to COVID-19 and the current situation. The Chinese Embassy in turn shared updates on the Chinese community. One of the main issues addressed were community networking to strengthen case identification.

- Day four of the sensitisation drive on Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO began at the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion. It continued with Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment, and Universidade Oriental Timor Lorosae.



- WHO presented on COVID-19 to the staff of the Archdiocese of Dili and made a request for using the influence and reach of the Church to educate and sensitise communities about COVID-19 for which WHO and MoH would provide all the necessary support.

- **Wednesday 12 February 2020**

- There is now a name for the disease: COVID-19.
- WHO, in a meeting with the National Health Laboratory (NHL) reviewed the procedure to send samples for testing for COVID-19 to Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory in Melbourne, Australia – a WHO reference laboratory. WHO also informed NHL of the procedure to use WHO shipment funds mechanism through “World Courier”.

- WHO will be providing the NHL with 10 test kits (1000 tests). Additionally, NHL has placed an order for CDC COVID-19 kit reagents which are available to Timor-Leste via the International Reagent Resource (IRR) system. WHO provided protocols for both test kits (WHO and CDC). Both assay are based on the realtime RT-PC and could be performed by National Health Laboratory. For quality assurance, every laboratory initiating the testing needs to send samples to a Reference Laboratory.
- A technical team from WHO and the surveillance team from the MoH met with Stamford Clinic director and team of doctors to brief about the MoH surveillance protocol, and discuss the cases coming to the clinic.

- The sensitisation drive being carried out by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO entered the third day as the joint team of the Ministry of Health and WHO presented at the Secretariat of State for Affairs of Combatants of National Liberation, Secretariat of State for Arts & Culture, Secretariat of State for Cooperatives, and Secretariat of State for Youth and Sport. The goal of these sessions is to provide the public and officials alike with accurate information on 2019-nCoV and prevent the spread of misinformation and rumormongering. The sensitisation drive is being conducted for all the line ministries and government agencies.



- **Tuesday 11 February 2020**

- More than 75 health workers from all over the country comprising district health directors, rapid response teams (RRTs), and surveillance focal points underwent a day-long workshop on 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV). The objective of the workshop is to equip health workers with accurate technical information on Novel Coronavirus - nCoV 2019, strengthen the emergency preparedness and response and put in place mechanisms for community surveillance. Another important aspect is to give accurate information to the public and dispel myths. The workshop was organised jointly by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO.



- The MoH in partnership with WHO is conducting sensitization session for ministries and government agencies on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV). The goal of these sessions is to provide the public and officials alike with accurate information on 2019-nCoV and prevent the spread of misinformation and rumormongering. On 11 February 2020, the joint team of MoH officials and WHO technical experts presented to the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Interior, Secretary of State Security and Civil Protection, Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals, Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Environment, and Secretary of State for Environment.



- **Monday 10 February 2020**

- The MoH in partnership with WHO is conducting sensitization session for ministries and government agencies on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV). The goal of these sessions is to provide the public and officials alike with accurate information on 2019-nCoV and prevent the spread of misinformation and rumormongering. Today's sessions begun



with Ministry of Transport and Communication and were followed by sessions at the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Works, and Ministry of State Administration, and Ministry of Planning and Strategic Investment.

- **Saturday 08 February 2020**

- On late Friday evening there were unconfirmed reports of a suspected case and death due to 2019-nCoV infection in Vemassee in Baucau. The said person arrived on 19 January from Shanghai via Bali to Dili to Vemassee. The person was already monitoring his temperature as mandated by his company, which was normal as per the records. He did have cough but had recovered already. The person showed no - other symptoms neither did anyone else who came in contact with him. The case was further examined at Baucau Referral Hospital for fever, x-ray and blood count, which came out to be normal. It was assuredly concluded that the person was not a suspected case of nCoV. His medical lab results were communicated to the local community health centre (CHC). The Ministry of Health will soon address the incident in a press conference.

- **Friday 07 February 2020**

- The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) convened the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meeting on Friday to ascertain the latest situation on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV). The advisor to the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, a number of international development partners, international non-governmental organizations, faith groups, and diplomatic missions took part in the meeting. WHO updated the participants on the latest on 2019 – nCoV, the response internationally as well as at the country level in Timor-Leste. WHO also informed the group of UN's in-country support focusing on strengthening collaboration for preparedness, capacity building of health system, provision of regular and accurate public information, enhanced surveillance and testing of suspected cases.



- The Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO conducted a National Media Workshop on Novel Coronavirus 2019 (2019–nCoV) in Dili. About 50 journalists from across media platforms like TV, radio, newspapers, community radio, websites and the MoH communication focal points from the municipalities. The objective of the workshop was to equip journalists with accurate information on nCoV and provide guidance on finding reliable sources to gather information on nCoV to prevent any misinformation and rumours.



- The MoH, WHO, Chinese Merchant Association, the Chinese Embassy and the Chinese Medical Brigade met to discuss community networking to strengthen case identification, quarantine, and case treatment.

- To sensitize and increase awareness about 2019–nCoV among the government officials, a team of WHO doctors and personnel from the Department of Health Promotion, MoH are going ministry to ministry making a presentation, dispelling myths and answering questions. This awareness drive will be conducted across ministries and government agencies.



- In the Council of Directors meeting, chaired by the Primary Health Care and Acting Minister of Health and Vice Minister of Strategic Health Development, the Acting Minister of Health summarized the measures taken by the Ministry for preparedness against 2019–nCoV. The Minister also called upon all the senior officials to be fully alert and prepared at all the point of entries.
- A collaboration meeting for members of the National Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was convened by the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) to update the HCT about the development of this outbreak globally, emergency preparedness in Timor-Leste and ways of joint working to support the incident response. WHO briefed the HCT and identified priorities for partner contributions.
- Efforts are in progress by the MoH (in collaboration with WHO) to identify sources and partners for continuing to augment our stocks of personal protective equipment.



- **Thursday 06 February 2020**

- Thirty-two officials of the National Medical Emergency team (including clinical directors of all five referral hospitals, doctors, nurses, mid-wives and senior officials from the Department of Ambulance and Medical Emergency) held technical discussions and participated in refresher training to manage potential nCoV cases. WHO technical experts conducted the training, which covered measures for prevention, clinical management, surveillance and the use of protective gear.
- Scores of public health officials from the Ministry of Health (MoH) underwent refresher training on nCoV and risk communication for nCoV.



- **Wednesday 05 February 2020**

- WHO, on behalf of the Ministry of Health (MoH), met about ten senior officials of the Cuban Medical Brigade (CMB) for information sharing and technical exchange on the investigation, management and surveillance of suspected, nCoV cases. Some members of the CMB also represented selected municipalities.



- The government of New Zealand is evacuating 17 Timorese students from Wuhan, China along with citizens of other countries including New Zealand as well. The students will be kept in isolation for 14 days in Whangaparaoa before returning to Timor-Leste.
- **Tuesday 04 February 2020**
 - Rapid assessment of alternate quarantine facility: A technical team from WHO visited and assessed preparedness at Formosa community health centre (CHC). In terms of surge capacity, this facility will be used to quarantine suspect cases of nCoV. Arrangements for staff, amenities, protective gear and medical supplies are underway.
 - Surveillance measures: a meeting was held between the MoH disease surveillance team and WHO technical staff to design tools for active surveillance and identify personnel for this activity.
- **Monday 03 February 2020**
 - Training provided to about 40 responders from Dili District (clinical staff from the five CHCs, ambulance crew, airport staff, seaport staff, animal and plant quarantine officers) and 10 health specialists from the Chinese Medical Brigade in Dili on the important aspects of the management of this illness.
 - Briefing to UN staff on the current situation, emergency preparedness in Timor-Leste and protective measures for individuals and important considerations for business continuity. Two sessions were held – chaired by the UNRC and delivered by a WHO staff.
 - WHO observed the function and operation of Dili Airport in screening the passengers, collecting and reviewing the health declaration cards and reporting possible suspected cases if any. Overall the screening process is going on as planned, but there are some limitations in the office space.
 - The Chinese Medical Brigade team and WHO colleagues met to discuss the preparedness plan including active surveillance, community awareness raising and networking of Chinese practitioners across Timor-Leste. This is a team of medical specialists working in the National Hospital, and they were briefed on the WHO guidelines of clinical management, infection control measures and preventative activities by WHO officials



- **Saturday 01 February 2020**

- Meeting with Health Minister for Primary Health Care and Acting Minister of Health with all relevant departments of the Ministry of Health, autonomous health agencies, WHO and UN Resident Coordinator to review preparedness and response plans to address the Coronavirus emergency.
- Meeting with H.E Ambassador of Peoples Republic of China to Timor-Leste, United Nations Resident Coordinator and WHO to discuss how each agency can support Government of Timor-Leste to mitigate the effects of possible nCoV introduction.



- **Friday 31 January 2020**

- Hands-on interactive training provided to about 150 doctors and nurses from the national hospital in Dili (HNGV) and the national Laboratory (NHL) on the important aspects of the management of nCoV. This includes general preventive measures, the use of protective gear, patient safety, clinical management of cases, follow-up of close contacts and environmental cleaning and decontamination. This training was provided by technical experts from WHO.

- **Thursday 30 January 2020**

- Presentations to the UN Country Team inform of the situation and solicit possible support.
- Refresher training and simulation exercise for all relevant MoH officials on use PPE and transport of patients at HNGV.

- **Tuesday 28 January 2020**

- Meeting with the Ministry of Education (MoE) authorities with MoH officials to develop a communication plan to get support from school authorities to disseminate information and messages through school system.
- Visit to Dili Airport with MoH officials for rapid assessment of Emergency Preparedness.
- Meeting with all development partners to inform the situation and solicit possible support.

- **Monday 27 January 2020**

- A 10 bedded ward was identified to be turned into a quarantine facility at HNGV for isolating and managing 2019 nCoV suspected and cases. Another meeting on the same day with the NHL to ascertain the lab's needs and support required for confirmation of suspected cases.
- The logistical arrangements to send the samples to Melbourne, Australia was discussed and agreed upon.
- Emergency and Health Cluster meeting chaired by the DG Health Services and UN agencies agreed to streamline the response.

- **Friday 24 January 2020**

- WHO Representative wrote to the Minister of Health on urgent priorities in case of nCoV outbreak in the country. IEC materials and Health Declaration Cards were handed over to Point of Entries such as Dili International Airport, Oecusse Airport and other main Point Entries in the countries (land crossing and sea ports).
- MoH (Point of Entry Program Manager and Airport Health Officer) and WHO TLS team developed the SOP for the procedure to check all incoming passengers at Dili Airport and other Point of Entries in the country.

- **Thursday 23 January 2020**

- Statement put out on the meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of nCoV 2019.

- **Wednesday 22 January 2020**

- WHO epidemiologist briefed the WHO Timor-Leste staff on the current status of nCoV outbreak in China and other parts of the world. Following the briefing, WHO Timor-Leste Emergency Preparedness and Surveillance teams met to go over the nCoV Readiness checklist, which was then submitted to the regional office. WHO Timor-Leste also issued a press advisory on nCoV.

- **Tuesday 21 January 2020**

- International Health Regulation (IHR 2005) focal point, point of entry (PoE) program manager met with the Vice Minister of Health Primary Health Care and Acting Minister of Health, Dr. Elia dos Reis Amaral to update on the current situation of nCoV and proposed activities that Timor-Leste should undertake to prepare if there there's a confirmed case detected in the country. Besides, identification of a dedicated isolation facility to admit confirmed cases should there be one, personal protective equipment (PPE) provisions and availability in case of transportation of confirmed case(s). The team also requested the Minister to support the team in coordination with other line ministries such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Interior to collaborate for tackling this new problem.

- **Monday 20 January 2020**

- WHO updated the rest of the UN Country team members in the nCoV situation in the country.

- **Friday 17 January 2020**

- International Health Regulation (IHR 2005) focal point, point of entry (PoE) program manager, risk communication focal point, executive director of the National Health Laboratory (NHL), head of surveillance department, ministry of health held a brief meeting with the Airport authorities which include immigration & Customs, Animal and Plant health quarantine, airport security officers and Flight Agencies with goal of collaborating with the airport authorities implementing preventive measures through active surveillance and case detection. And to introduce health declaration card to airport authorities and seek their support to case detection by checking possible infected passengers through information that have been provided in the health declaration card. The meeting also sought to decide to work with Airline Agencies with support and permission from Airport Authorities to distribute health declaration card and nCov brochures and set up banners at the airport and other main Point of Entries in the country.

- **Wednesday 15 January 2020**

- International Health Regulation (IHR 2005) focal point, point of entry (PoE) program manager, risk communication focal point, executive director of the National Health Laboratory (NHL), head of surveillance department, ministry of health, and the WHO Country Office Timor-Leste met with the Director General (DG) Health Services, Ministry of Health, Dr Odete Da Silva Viegas to brief her about the Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV) outbreak in China and other affected countries.
- In addition, the meeting was also to discuss Timor-Leste's preparedness should there be a confirmed case in the country. One of the outcome of this meeting was to come up with brochures and banners for increasing health awareness, and health declaration card for case detection purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

During previous outbreak 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 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.

WHO does not recommend any specific health measures for travellers. In case of symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel, travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share their travel history with their healthcare provider.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS total and new cases in last 24 hours

Globally

46997 confirmed (1826 new)

China

46550 confirmed (1820 new)

1368 deaths (254 new)

Outside of China

447 confirmed (6 new)

24 countries

1 death

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

China Very High

Regional Level High

Global Level High

Should you wear a mask?

YES, if you are experiencing uneasiness in breathing, cough

YES, while caring for persons with respiratory (breathing) symptoms

YES, all health workers should while attending to persons with respiratory symptoms

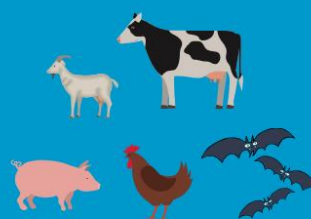
NOT required for general public without respiratory symptoms



World Health
Organization
Timor-Leste

Protect yourself from getting sick

Avoid unprotected contact with sick people (including touching one's eyes, nose or mouth) and **with live farm or wild animals**



World Health
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Protect others from getting sick



Avoid close contact when you are experiencing cough and fever

Avoid spitting in public



If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing **seek medical care early** and share previous travel history with your health care provider



World Health Organization



Protect others from getting sick

Cover mouth and nose with tissue, sleeve or elbow when coughing or sneezing



Throw tissue into closed bin after use

Clean hands after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick



World Health Organization



Wash your hands

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



If your **hands are not visibly dirty**, wash them with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser



World Health Organization



Ministério da Saúde

Link to WHO Timor-Leste:

<https://web.facebook.com/WHOTL/>

Link for Information and Guidance from WHO regarding current outbreak of novel Corona Virus (2019-nCoV)

Please visit the page for daily updates:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>