Since 31 December 2019, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) has been responding to the outbreak that would eventually become the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO is working with countries across the Region, analyzing the latest data and science, informing and engaging the public, providing updates on the current situation, coordinating with partners, distributing life-saving supplies, advancing preparedness and strengthening health systems. This weekly situation report will highlight the most recent developments in the regional response.

WEEKLY SITUATION UPDATE

- In the Western Pacific Region, a total of 22 countries and areas have reported COVID-19 cases since December 2019. As of 6 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8), there have been a total of 154,884 COVID-19 cases including 6,327 deaths (4.1% PFC) reported in the region. Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of COVID-19 cases. The colour represents the number of cases reported in the last 7 days.

- Globally, as of 6 May 2020, 10:00 CEST, there have been 3,588,773 COVID-19 cases including 247,503 deaths in 214 countries/states/territories (6.9% PFC). Many countries that have experienced large outbreaks have also reported considerable COVID-19 mortality and excess mortality. The two WHO regions most affected to date have been AMRO and EURO, which combined account for 86% of all cases and 92% of deaths reported globally.

Figure 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 6 May 2020 10:00 (GMT+8)
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

- More than 1,800 people participated in a week-long webinar series on "WHO Clinical Perspectives on COVID-19", aiming to build a cadre of additional trained staff to serve as back-up capacity in the Philippines. The audience consisted of residents, interns, general practitioners, retired physicians, nurses, non-ICU staff and volunteers.
- Over 60 government, non-government, UN and multilateral partners joined the 2nd Western Pacific Region Virtual Partners Briefing held on 30 April. The meeting aimed to build a shared understanding of the current situation and to serve as an opportunity for partners to brief each other on response activities.
- As transport and access is increasingly challenging, WHO WPRO’s Operations Support and Logistics team has been looking at novel ways to make use of charter flights and national assets (e.g. military aircrafts) in collaboration with partners and commercial companies. To date, a total of 171,552 tests have been sent for 21 laboratories in 10 countries. Procurement and distribution of lab equipment, including universal transport medium, swab kits and RT-PCR consumables, is ongoing.
- More than 250 million people across the Western Pacific Region have been reached with ads promoting key protective behaviours thanks to a partnership with Facebook. Through a partnership with Twitter, people searching for information on COVID-19 in 11 countries and areas in the Region are being directed to accurate and localized information, in local languages, from WHO and national health authorities.

WPRO ACTIONS

Leadership and Management

- The Incident Management Support Team (IMST) was set up at WPRO on 2 January 2020 to provide strategic leadership and management to the regional COVID-19 response. It has since been expanded and periodically re-structured according to the current situation in the Western Pacific Region.
- The IMST is working closely with the Incident Management Teams (IMT) set up in WHO country offices to identify and address key priorities for countries as they go through the various stages of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The first (virtual) technical forum for Pacific island countries and territories on COVID-19 was held by the Division of Pacific Technical Support, inviting distinguished Ministers, Heads of Health and partners. These forums will take place regularly to enable varying thematic discussions, experience sharing, and facilitated discussions covering key issues.
- Dr Takeshi Kasai, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, invited all IHR National Focal Points to the weekly Video Teleconference to facilitate sharing of experience, and to discuss the evolving COVID-19 situation in the Region. This week the Government of New Zealand shared its country experience.
Finance and Administration

- WHO WPRO has processed a total of 121 deployments, of which 45 were country deployments in 9 countries. There are currently 13 active deployments in 8 countries.
- Based on WPRO’s Regional Action Plan, country offices have started costing activities in their COVID-19 action plans. As of 6 May, 8 countries have submitted their plans. This information will be used to distribute resources according to country needs.

Health Service Delivery

Health Systems

- WHO country offices in seven countries, along with the Division of Pacific Technical Support, developed work plans to support countries to prepare and strengthen their health care systems and care pathways for COVID-19. These workplans cover the next six months and aim to help countries not only prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic but contribute to mid- and long-term health system strengthening.

Community Engagement

- The Division of Pacific Technical Support and country offices have supported the development of community engagement work plans for 15 countries. WHO WPRO launched a community engagement network to share and document successful practices and further strengthen the regional movement of individuals contributing to the COVID-19 response.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Clinical Management

- More than 1800 people participated in a week-long webinar series on "WHO Clinical Perspectives on COVID-19", aiming to build a cadre of additional trained staff to serve as back-up capacity in the Philippines. The audience consisted of residents, interns, general practitioners, retired physicians, nurses, non-ICU staff and volunteers.

Laboratory

- In view of the global shortage of vital diagnostic supplies and difficulties delivering them to final users, a global Diagnostic Consortium has been established, including WHO, the World Bank, Global Fund, UNICEF, UNITAID, FIND and other agencies. The purpose of the Consortium is to ensure coordinated procurement of COVID-19 diagnostics and related critical supplies and jointly negotiate fair pricing. The Consortium will be working with WHO regional offices to develop priority allocation principles and initial allocation plan.
- Laboratory reagents such as RNA extraction kits, swabs and transport medium, and RT-PCR reagents (primers, probes and enzymes) have been distributed to countries including Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea and Philippines. Distribution of GeneXpert cartridges for PNG and all Pacific island countries is ongoing.
- An information note for countries has been developed and shared on molecular and serological methods for the laboratory diagnosis of COVID-19. The note is based on the latest WHO recommendations and available scientific evidence and takes different laboratory settings into account.
Mental Health

- Apart from direct threats to personal health, safety and livelihood, COVID-19 is also having a significant impact on mental health and psychosocial well-being. Adversity is an established risk factor for mental health problems, thus the impact of COVID-19 on mental health is expected to be large, diverse and far reaching. WPRO supported countries to include mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in their national public health response to COVID-19. Guidance was provided to countries on the treatment of mental and neurological manifestations of COVID-19, and a regional communication plan on mental health and psychosocial support addressing different target groups was widely disseminated and adopted by countries.

Information and Planning

Surveillance

- WPRO classifies transmission according to three categories: imported cases (stage 1), localised community transmission (stage 2)2 and large-scale community transmission (stage 3).3 Available data indicate most countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region are experiencing stage 1 or stage 2 transmission but have not seen stage 3 transmission. In most countries, the number of reported cases is decreasing, after the first or second wave of cases. Several countries and areas are reporting low case numbers or no reported cases for more than seven days. Some countries are starting to lift their non-pharmaceutical interventions.

- Information and Planning is revising the regional dashboard and aims to include sub-national data on the epidemiology and healthcare capacity for all countries and areas in the region. Activities have continued to strengthen existing surveillance systems into a multisource assessment platform to detect cases, assess transmission, mobilize resources, and make decisions on non-pharmaceutical interventions.

- Data submitted by IHR National Focal Points has been analyzed and was presented during the meeting with NFPS on 7 May 2020.

- WHO WPRO is supporting Mongolia to install Go.data, an online tool to gather and automatically analyse surveillance data in real time, at the National Centre for Communicable Diseases. In the next phase, all 23 provincial health centres will receive training and connect to the Central Go-data server.

- WHO WPRO is also supporting PNG to install a new version of Go.data for COVID-19 case and cluster analysis.

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1 Imported cases (stage 1): most cases have been acquired outside the location of reporting or are directly linked to imported cases, and the generation of secondary cases is limited.

2 Localized community transmission (stage 2): local transmission has been detected (i.e., cases cannot be linked to importation), but most sources of infection are identified, and most cases are occurring within a defined geographical area.

3 Large-scale community transmission (stage 3): cases cannot be easily linked to a source of infection, persons in the area are at high risk for infection.
Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, as of 6 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8) (n=154,884)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country, territory, area</th>
<th>Case numbers</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Change in 7-day average</th>
<th>Days since last reported case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>84406</td>
<td>4643</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6,849</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNMI</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>15354</td>
<td>543</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Korea (Republic of)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>23.3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>-195.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries >5000 cases, 6 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8)
IHR and Border Measures

- WPRO has received information from 32 countries and areas implementing additional measures at borders. Some countries and areas with consistently fewer case numbers are discussing how to reduce measures safely and in parallel with easing of domestic travel restrictions.
- As of 24 April, 186 out of 196 countries reported travel restriction measures, having increased significantly after COVID-19 was characterized as a pandemic. Figure 4 shows the number of travel restriction measures officially reported each week per WHO region.
Operations Support and Logistics

- The WPRO OSL Pillar is working on procuring essential COVID-19 supplies in line with HQ’s newly formed Supply Chain System and its three consortiums; namely Biomed, PPE, and Diagnostics. These consortiums aim to ensure coordinated procurement and the joint negotiation of fair pricing.
- Procurement and distribution of lab equipment is ongoing, including universal transport medium, swab kits and RT-PCR consumables. Reagents for a total of 171,552 tests have been sent to 10 countries for 15 laboratories with additional destinations in the pipeline.
- Over the past seven days, the strategic regional stockpile has been replenished with 2,000,000 surgical masks and other PPE items, as well as the arrival of in-kind donations.
- Due to the ongoing Extended Community Quarantine (ECQ) in Manila, the strategic regional stockpile of essential COVID-19 related items has been moved to the Regional Office to ensure rapid and continuous access.
- As transport and access is increasingly challenging, WPRO’s OSL team has been looking at novel ways to make use of charter flights and national assets (e.g. military aircrafts) in collaboration with partners and commercial companies.

![WPRO PPE dashboard](image-url)
Partner Coordination

- In coordination with HQ, WPRO is actively engaging countries to join and contribute to the Partners Platform. The platform allows countries to show, in real-time, what actions are being taken to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. The portal was launched on 29 April 2020.
- As of today, WPRO has onboarded and trained focal points in 20 countries. Five countries have uploaded their country plans. WPRO continues to work closely with HQ to provide support to countries.
- The second Western Pacific Region Virtual Partners Briefing was held on 30 April 2020. The meeting aimed to build a shared understanding of the current situation and to serve as an opportunity for partners to brief each other on response activities. Over 60 participants took part in the meeting, representing government, non-government, UN and multilateral partners across the Asia Pacific region working on the COVID-19 response.

Strategic Communication

- More than 250 million people across the Western Pacific Region have been reached with ads promoting key protective behaviours, thanks to a partnership with Facebook.
- WPRO is also working with Twitter to combat the infodemic. People searching the platform for information on COVID-19 in 11 countries and areas within the Region are being directed to accurate and localized information, in local languages, from WHO and national health authorities.
- **New materials are available** on:
  - Physical distancing
  - Staying safe during Ramadan
  - Recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19 and knowing when to seek care
- Multi-agency guidance on the [inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in risk communication and community engagement](#) has been updated and published.
- The eighth risk communication webinar, this time on the topic of “Polling and Surveys for Perception Assessment and Behavioural Insights” was held on 6 May. Participation in the weekly webinars is open to WHO and Ministry of Health staff in the Western Pacific Region. During World Immunization Week, [WHO called for essential health services, such as routine immunization, to be sustained](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Asia-Pacific Working Group on Risk Communication and Community Engagement – co-led by the regional offices of WHO, OCHA and IFRC – has established six sub-groups focusing on delivering priority action in the following areas:
  - Community feedback and rumour tracking
  - Radio programming
  - Translation and plain-language editing
  - Inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups
  - Children and youth
  - Risk communication for journalists
MESSAGES FOR THE PUBLIC

“The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over in Asia and the Pacific. This is going to be a long battle, and we need to ready ourselves for a new way of living for the foreseeable future”

— WHO Regional Director, Dr Takeshi Kasai, during the latest virtual press conference

For those of us who participate in Ramadan, it may feel strange not to go to the mosque or to gather with loved ones. But with COVID-19 continuing to spread, it’s safer if we stay home. Read WHO’s advice on safe Ramadan practices during COVID-19

More WHO advice for the public on COVID-19

REGIONAL COVID-19 GUIDANCE

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Action Plan for Response to Large scale Community Outbreaks of COVID-19 (https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14506/9789290619154-eng.pdf)
COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement

Preparing for large-scale community transmission of COVID-19: guidance for countries and areas in the WHO Western Pacific Region (CHINESE)
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14498/COVID-19-03272020-chi.pdf)

Preparing for large-scale community transmission of COVID-19: guidance for countries and areas in the WHO Western Pacific Region
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14493/COVID-19-02282020.pdf)

Information Note on HIV and COVID-19
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14508/COVID-19-HIV-services-eng.pdf)

Infection prevention during transfer and transport of patients with suspected COVID-19 requiring hospital care

Addressing noncommunicable diseases in the COVID 19 response
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14511/NCD-COVID-19-eng.pdf)


Role of primary care in the COVID-19 response
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14510/Primary-care-COVID-19-eng.pdf)

Routine Immunization Services during COVID-19 Pandemic
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14513/Routine-immunization-services-COVID-19-eng.pdf)

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) aspects of COVID-19 response
(https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14515/Mental-health-COVID-19-eng.pdf)