Since 31 December 2019, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) has been responding to control 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 (WPR), a total of 22 countries and areas have reported COVID-19 cases since December 2019. Between 13 and 19 May 2020, there have been a total of 7,306 cases with 238 deaths reported in the region, bringing the cumulative total to 169,178 cases including 6,765 deaths (a Proportion of Fatal Cases (PFC) of 4.0%), as of 19 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8). 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 18 May 2020, 10:00 CEST, there have been 4,618,821 COVID-19 cases including 311,847 deaths in 215 countries/states/territories (6.8% PFC). Many countries that have experienced large outbreaks have also reported considerable excess mortality. Although the WHO Americas Region (AMRO) and European Region (EURO) are the most affected regions accounting for 84.6% of all cases and 92.6% of deaths reported globally, there has been a continued increasing trend shown in Africa Region (AFRO), Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) and South East Asia Region (SEARO).

**Figure 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 13-19 May 2020 10:00 (GMT+8)**
Several countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region are reporting low case numbers or no reported cases for more than seven days and are starting to lift their Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs). WPRO has issued new guidance, calibrating long-term non-pharmaceutical interventions for COVID-19, to help countries make decisions on lifting and reinstating NPIs. The Organization has also developed and shared a set of key messages to help leaders communicate the lifting of non-pharmaceutical interventions and introduce the “new normal”.

**WPRO ACTIONS**

**Leadership and Management**

- The Incident Management Support Team (IMST) has been further strengthened with the appointment of two Deputy Incident Managers.
- The IMST convenes twice daily for pillar and country updates as well as dissemination of relevant, response-critical information to ensure country response is aligned to the regional action plan.
- The IMST continues to support countries’ response to the evolving COVID-19 situation, while ensuring longer term strengthening of healthcare systems and continuation of routine healthcare service delivery.

**Finance and Administration**

- The team continues to review and update the COVID-19 shared human resource plan for the Western Pacific Region to ensure coverage and sustainability of technical support based on identified needs until the end of December, as per the extended response operational timeline.
- Two new recruitments have been finalized. This brings the total number of deployments to 138.
- A number of contracted experts continue to provide remote support to the Regional Office and country offices through teleworking arrangements, making themselves available across multiple time zones and through multiple means of technology. They continue to adapt teleworking as a way of providing support to the response.
- Based on the plans submitted by eight country offices, funds have been distributed for priority activities with immediate implementation deadlines.

**Health Service Delivery**

**Health Systems**

- WPRO has organized a series of webinars in collaboration with SEARO to provide technical guidance and facilitate knowledge exchange among countries on effective COVID-19 response. The webinars included topics addressing health workforce needs, strengthening the role of Primary Health Care (PHC) in the care pathway and in maintaining essential health services, as well as the importance of strategic purchasing and engagement with private sectors.

  China, Republic of Korea, and Thailand have stressed the need to provide a supportive and safe work environment for health care workers as a requirement to create a resilient health system.
The countries have raised issues such as recognition and compensation for health workers as well as the importance of investing in the health workforce.

Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong Special Administrate Region (SAR) and Fiji noted the importance of PHC, community engagement and the key role that is required of PHC in overall preparedness and response planning.

India and the Philippines highlighted the principles of strategic purchasing, country actions, and the engagement with the private sector for maximum effectiveness in COVID-19 response.

Community Engagement
- The community engagement team at WPRO is collaborating with partners, contributing to a brief interagency survey tool to receive feedback directly from communities. The feedback from communities will seek information on barriers to performing recommended behaviours, challenges adhering to NPIs and the presence of two-way communication channels that provide actionable information to countries.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Clinical Management
- The WPRO IPC team held the weekly regional IPC network webinar #6 “Healthcare Facility Ventilation in the context of COVID-19” by Prof Wing Hong Seto, Hong Kong. It was attended by over 275 participants across the region.

Laboratory / Diagnostics
- The WPRO is working with countries (through CO PMOs/PAOs/Lab focal points) to support procurement of essential laboratory supplies and reagents using COVID-19 Supply Portal (https://covid-19-response.org/). This is part of a new procurement process established through the global Diagnostic Consortium (WHO, World Bank, Global Fund, UNICEF, UNITAID, FIND and other agencies).

Mental Health
- A 4 week continuation phase of the regional communication plan on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support MHPSS is underway covering: (1) promoting a mentally healthy workplace for frontline and other essential workers; (2) addressing emerging mental health conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety, suicidality) and decompensation of people living with mental disorders; (3) addressing isolation of confirmed COVID-19 cases and complicated grief; and (4) promoting resilience to prolonged exposure to adversity.

Science/Research
- The Science & Research sub-pillar conducted a webinar on diagnostics and testing strategies, submitted a review of the previous week’s COVID-19 publications, and finalized briefing notes on:
  - secondary attack rates in households/workplaces,
  - pre-symptomatic/a-symptomatic transmission,
  - positive PCR results following apparent recovery,
  - multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, and
  - infections among healthcare workers.

Information and Planning

Surveillance
WPRO classifies transmission according to three stages: imported cases (stage 1), localised community transmission (stage 2) and large-scale community transmission (stage 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 continues work on sub-national data on the epidemiology and healthcare capacity for all countries and areas in the region. Activities aim to strengthen existing surveillance systems into a multisource assessment platform to detect cases, assess transmission, mobilize resources, and make decisions on NPIs.

WPRO continues supporting COVID-19 responders with the implementation of Go.Data, an online/offline outbreak investigation tool for field data collection during public health emergencies, managed by the Global Outbreak and Response Network (GOARN). Around 30% of WPR countries are using Go.Data. WPRO trainings in countries to support WHO Country Offices, Governments and National institutions to implement the tool is ongoing.

On 19 May, Information and Planning conducted a webinar with WHE Focal Points in WHO country offices on COVID-19 transmission assessment. The goal of this webinar was to create shared understanding of COVID-19 transmission levels for stronger collaboration and response.

Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, as of 19 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8) (n=169,178)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO Region</th>
<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>WPRO</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>84,500</td>
<td>4,645</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7,060</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNMI</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>16,365</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>-33.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korea (Republic of)</td>
<td>11,078</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>New Confirmed</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Delta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>6,941</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>-22.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>12,718</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>28,343</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-64.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Figure 3. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries <5000 cases, as of 19 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8)

International Health Regulations (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 the easing of domestic travel restrictions.

- To date, 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.

  **Figure 4. Number of travel restriction measures reported per WHO region**

  ![Figure 4](image)

  Operations Support and Logistics

  - In the Western Pacific Region, WHO has provided 13 tons of personal protective equipment (PPE) to 24 countries and areas, and more shipments are being prepared.
  
  - More than 530,000 N95 and surgical masks have been sent to countries in the Region, in addition to the 2 million surgical masks currently being distributed to priority groups in countries where there are shortages.
  
  - WHO headquarters is providing support to help allocate PPE to low-resource countries and areas. In the coming weeks, the Western Pacific Region will receive bulk PPE stocks from the ongoing global procurement.
  
  - To increase testing capacity, WPRO has sent reagent kits to 21 laboratories in 10 countries. This is enough for more than 171,500 tests.
  
  - 100,000 swabs have arrived in the Western Pacific region to meet sampling and testing shortages in priority countries.

Partner Coordination

- Over 20 participants from the region participated in a virtual meeting to discuss the COVID-19 Partners Platform and to receive training on the new Supply Portal. To date, the region has uploaded seven country plans and one WHO country office plan to the COVID-19 platform.

- WPRO in coordination with the United Nations Office for Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), is exploring options for mapping partners’ operational presence by geography and according to technical area to strengthen support the COVID-19 response efforts.
**Strategic Communications**

- WPRO has developed and shared a set of key messages to help leaders communicate the lifting of non-pharmaceutical interventions and introduce the “new normal”.
- The COVID-19 section of the WPRO website has been relaunched with a brand-new, more user-friendly design.
- Last week’s webinar, on “communicating the new normal: phase 1”, was the most successful to date, attracting 72 participants, mostly risk communication and community engagement staff from WHO country offices and ministries of health. The next webinar, on “managing the infodemic and responding to rumours”, was held on 20 May.

**Figure 5. WPRO risk communication webinar topics and participation form March 2020 to May 2020.**

**MESSAGES FOR THE PUBLIC**

"In moving forward, we should create a new normal in which we don’t have to choose between health and livelihood. Rather, we should bring up both. The big decisions on how to do this need to be made together — bringing together the health sector, economic sector and community at one table."

-- Dr Takeshi Kasai, WHO Regional Director, at last week’s virtual press conference on COVID-19 in Asia, hosted by the World Economic Forum
Talking about your feelings will lessen your distress.

It is normal to feel fearful and anxious during this time.

More WHO advice for the public on COVID-19

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**REGIONAL COVID-19 GUIDANCE**

- Algorithm for COVID-19 triage and referral. Patient triage and referral for resource-limited settings during community transmission
- Guidance on COVID-19 for the care of older people and people living in long-term care facilities, other non-acute care facilities and home care
- 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)
- The COVID-19 Partners Platform & Supply Portal
- The COVID-19 risk communication package for healthcare facilities
  (https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14482/COVID-19-022020.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
  (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)

● Calibrating long-term non-pharmaceutical interventions for COVID-19 : principles and facilitation tools (https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14520)