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, 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 19 countries and areas have reported COVID-19 cases since December 2019. Between 18 and 24 May 2020, there have been a total of 6,046 cases with 133 deaths reported in the region, bringing the cumulative total to 173,592 cases including 6,863 deaths (PFC 4.0%) as of 24 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 24 May 2020, 10:00 CEST, there have been 5,204,508 COVID-19 cases including 337,687 deaths in 215 countries/states/territories (6.5% PFC). Many countries that have experienced large outbreaks have also reported considerable excess mortality. Although AMRO and EURO are the most affected regions accounting for 83.5% of all cases and 92.4% of deaths reported globally, there has been a continued increasing trend shown in AFRO, EMRO and SEARO.

Figure 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 24 May 2020 10:00 (GMT+8)
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

- More than 450 million people across the Region have been reached with risk communication messages through a partnership with Facebook.

WPRO ACTIONS

Leadership and Management

- The COVID-19 response in the Member States of the Western Pacific Region continues to be aligned to the Regional Action Plan and aims to minimize health impact and as well as socio-economic impact.
- Response in the region is focused on immediate impact and on longer term health system strengthening to assist Member States increase their preparedness and response capacities.

Finance and Administration

- The total deployments as of 21 May is 142 experts (this includes the 48 country missions). There are currently 16 active deployments in country offices.
- There have been no new deployments to country offices in the past week due to ongoing difficulties in flight availability and travel restrictions. This is anticipated to remain in the coming weeks.
- Updated the shared human resource plan based on feedback obtained from Pillar leads’ discussion with country office focal points. To fill the identified HR gaps, exploratory emails were sent to potential candidates from the WHE roster and posting of advertisements to the United Nations Global Market.
- Conducted virtual training on emergency standard operating procedures, focusing on consultancy and service procurements to selected WHE general service country focal points and few Regional Office colleagues from other technical divisions.
- Introduced electronic completion of end of consultancy deliverables and performance evaluation by creating editable PDF versions where they can affix their digital signature and lessen the need to print, sign and scan documents back to initiators.
- As at 19 May, the available COVID-19 funding for the Region is at USD 29.2 million from different sources. 85% are distributed to countries and 15% for the Regional Office response operations.

Health Service Delivery

Health Systems

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) is working with the World Bank, Global Fund, and ADB, to organize a training on health budget planning and to direct analytical support to various countries (initially Papua New Guinea, Laos PDR, and Viet Nam) on budgetary procedures, budget volume and flow on COVID-19. WPRO is also reviewing legal interventions on current data tracking apps, with a checklist for the country’s consideration on ethical and legal aspects on the use of private data.
Community Engagement

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) developed and published an interim technical guidance on community engagement for Member States. The guidance is on effective support for communities in the prevention and management of the COVID-19 pandemic, through empowerment and ownership of response activities such as adherence to non-pharmaceutical public health measures and optimizing the role of community health workers.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Clinical Management

- Conducted regional IPC network webinar #7 “Strengthening Triage Processes: Viet Nam’s Experience” by Prof Le Anh Thu, Vietnam with 70 participants attending. Developed IPC healthcare facility assessment tools (triage, isolation areas) in collaboration with Bach Mai Hospital and WCO Vietnam.

Laboratory

- Worked hand-in-hand with country offices, facilitating the submission of 3-month requests for Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) kits and consumables through Diagnostic Consortium mechanism (Supply Portal).

Mental Health

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) initiated a review of practices from different Western Pacific countries and areas that ensure continuity of mental health care and the provision of mental health services during and in the aftermath of the outbreak of COVID-19.

Science / Research

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) conducted a webinar on vaccines in the pipeline and lessons learned from the 2009 Influenza A H1N1 pandemic vaccine deployment; shared a review of the previous week’s COVID-19 publications; liaised with Australian sports teams regarding piloting the HQ mass gatherings sporting events risk assessment tools; developing mechanism to share talking points on key science topics with WRs; and finalized briefing notes on secondary attack rates in households/workplaces, PCR detection variability for COVID-19, and asymptomatic / pre-symptomatic infections.

Information and Planning

Surveillance

- WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) classifies transmission according to three categories: imported cases (stage 1)$^1$, 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.

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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.
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.

- Regional Office Information and Planning have conducted the following activities;
  - A webinar on transmission assessment using multisource surveillance with WCO colleagues and MS counterparts;
  - Led a working group with WCO colleagues to draft a regional guidance for conducting multisource surveillance of COVID-19;
  - Has continued to assess transmission stages for the countries/areas in WPR;
  - Has continued to support setting of Go.Data in member states;
  - Conducted situation analysis for six countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, India, Indonesia and Venezuela) outside our region.

Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, as of 24 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8) (n=173,592)

<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>
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<td>Confirmed Cases</td>
<td>New Cases</td>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td></td>
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Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries >5000 cases, 24 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8)

Figure 3. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries <5000 cases, as of 24 May 2020, 10:00 (GMT+8)
International Health Regulations (IHR) and Border Measures

- Facilitated inputs from China NFP for finalization and publication of 2 EISs on Influenza H9N2.
- Updated border measures from WPR for EIS publication.
- Shared information on the status of crew on board of Ecuador fishing boat (Charo) with 29/30 crew confirmed with Covid-19 currently on international waters in South Pacific with IHR focal points of EURO and PAHO for support. IHR focal of France has also been alerted for possible support.

Operations Support and Logistics

- Distribution to WHO Western Pacific Region Member States of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and fingerpulse oximeters ongoing.
- Pacific distribution plan of Cepheid GeneXpert systems used in COVID-19 testing put on hold by the diagnostic consortium. RO in contact with HQ and finding solutions for consortium to take into consideration systems and distribution plan setup by WPRO with partners.

Partner Coordination

- To date, 8 country plans (Cambodia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, PNG, Philippines, Samoa, Vietnam) and 1 WHO Country Office plan have been uploaded to the COVID-19 Partners Platform https://covid-19-response.org/).

Strategic Communication

- More than 450 million people across the Western Pacific Region have been reached with risk communication messages through a partnership with Facebook.
- WPRO has established a process for analysing intel gathered on community perceptions, knowledge, behaviours etc gathered through listening activities (such as social media monitoring, media monitoring, surveys and polls) and using it to inform response decision-making. This analysis
will be presented every two weeks at the regional IMST and shared with country offices and partners.

- Training was conducted for WHO country offices on the use of a new social media listening tool.
- More than 50 participants, mostly risk communication and community engagement focal points from country offices and ministries of health, attended the most recent webinar on “managing the infodemic and responding to rumours”. WPRO also supported a bi-regional webinar for the Asia-Pacific, hosted by UNICEF, on “back to school”.
- Two videos have been released illustrating WHO’s response, demonstrating our role in:
  - Epidemiology and Information Management
  - Partner Coordination
- New editable risk communication packages have been finalised and shared on:
  - The safe celebration of Eid (Facebook, Twitter)
  - The lifting of restrictions and the need to continue key protective measures (Facebook, Twitter)

MESSAGES FOR THE PUBLIC

A HOW-TO GUIDE for PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Even small group activities can lead to COVID-19 spreading. Protect yourself and others. Do your part. Stay home.

Share the message on Twitter or on Facebook.

More WHO advice for the public on COVID-19

REGIONAL COVID-19 GUIDANCE

- Please refer to the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific's Institutional Repository for Information Sharing (WPRO IRIS) for the latest updates and guidance (https://iris.wpro.who.int/).