



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PRESS STATEMENT

Update on Uganda's preparedness situation following the corona virus 2019 outbreak in China and other countries around the World.

Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng

Minister of Health

5th February, 2020

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Update on Uganda's preparedness situation following the 2019 Novel Corona virus outbreak in China and other countries around the World.

The Ministry of Health Uganda would like to update the general public on the country's preparedness following the declaration of a confirmed outbreak of novel corona virus (2019-nCoV) in China that has now spread to other countries.

First, the Ministry would like to give Global update as follows;

As of 4th February 2020, there are a total of 24,600 confirmed cases in 25 countries including China. (*This is an increase of over five times in one week*) 156 cases are confirmed in countries outside China. The total mortality is 494 in China. So far, only two deaths have been reported outside mainland China –this is in Hong Kong and the Philippines

To-date, Uganda does not have any confirmed or suspected case of the 2019 novel corona virus.

However, Uganda has since intensified its vigilance to quickly identify any suspected cases of 2019-nCoV by enhancing the surveillance and reporting systems. This is aimed at preventing entry and spread of the deadly virus into the country.

An Inter-ministerial committee composed of; Ministries of Health, Trade, Defence, Foreign Affairs, ICT and National guidance, Internal Affairs, Tourism and Works and Transport has since been established under the leadership of the Prime Minister to oversee coordination of the preparedness activities against the spread of the 2019-nCoV. This committee also co-opts development partners like World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention And others.

The Ministry of Health has developed a preparedness plan costed at UGX 25 billion for handling the threat of this epidemic. This will be funded by the Government of Uganda and partners.

On 4th February, 2020, the Committee led by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda briefed His Excellency the President of Uganda on the current threat of the 2019- nCoV and the strategies for prevention, detection and response.

In this respect, the Ministry of Health would like to inform the general public about the strategies being undertaken to protect them;



1. Screening at Entebbe International Airport with the view of identifying those who may be infected with 2019 n-Cov.
 - a) All travellers will be screened and more emphasis will be put on those travelling in from China. All Ugandan Nationals and Foreigners travelling from China will undergo screening. Those found with signs and symptoms will be quarantined in the Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital and China-Uganda Friendship hospital, Naguru. Those without visible symptoms will be isolated and quarantined in their houses after sensitization. ***Even without symptoms, infected persons may be infectious but this is in rare cases.*** They will be followed up for 14 days by our surveillance officers who will monitor them for signs and symptoms of the 2019 n-Cov on a daily basis. After 14 days, quarantined persons will only be released by the surveillance officers upon certification that they are okay.
 - b) All travelers arriving into the country from China or the 23 countries with confirmed cases will be required to provide their personal details including home address, telephone numbers and the next of kin's details for purposes of follow up by the health workers and immigration officers carrying out the screening.
 - c) We appeal to the general public and travelers to exercise discipline, care, compassion and responsibility when isolated. Please follow the guidance given to you by the Ministry of Health's surveillance officers so that we protect one another, protect the general public and our country.
 - d) Health workers at all health facilities across the country and points of entry have been guided on how to;
 - Identify, isolate, investigate and care for the suspected persons early.
 - Notify the next reporting level in line with national disease notification guidelines or the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre.
 - Employ the standard infection prevention and control measures to avoid contracting the disease.
 - From today onwards until the end of this outbreak, the Ministry of Health advises the general public against shaking of hands whether it is for purposes of greeting or otherwise.



2. The Ministry of Health is currently undertaking risk communication and public awareness campaigns to educate the general public on how to prevent the novel corona virus. All persons will be reached with these messages either through print, radio, social media, door to door or television and digital media. The Ministry will also target district leaders, religious, cultural and political leaders. This will be done in conjunction with the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

About the novel corona virus (2019-nCoV)

The 2019 novel Corona viruses (CoV) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and animals and can spread from person-to-person through **sneezing** and **cough-droplets**. This virus has signs and symptoms **similar** to the common cold but is more dangerous and spreads faster. If not reported and management commenced early by Health Workers it can cause severe illnesses and death to human-beings.

Everyone is at risk; however, severe symptoms and death appear more frequently among older people. People with underlying health conditions such as lung or heart diseases and weak immune systems are noted to be at a higher risk of infection. Currently, there is a huge outbreak in China which is fast spreading world-wide. Travelers to and from China are potentially, the most-at-risk.

Common signs of infection include running nose, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Important Prevention message to the General Public

Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include;

- Avoid close contact with people who are visibly sick with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sneezing and running nose).
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you experience these symptoms to avoid spreading illness to others.



- Persons with flu like symptoms are encouraged to use a face-mask to cover the nose and mouth to reduce risk of spread.
- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or handkerchief when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water (Good coughing and sneezing etiquette).
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as door handles.

In Conclusion,

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for the novel 2019 corona virus. However, people who are infected should immediately seek medical care to receive supportive treatment which include; analgesics, for the fever, fluids and where necessary, oxygen and antibiotics.

The Ministry of Health would like to reassure the general public that it has the capacity to handle this threat and a well-established Uganda Virus Research Institute capable of making the diagnosis.

The Ministry of Health further appeals to the general public to remain calm and report any suspicious cases to the nearest health facility or call our toll free lines **0800-203-033** and **0800-100-066**, and the following officers- **Mr. Atek Kajrita-0782 909153** **Dr. Allan Muruta-0772 460297** **Dr. Opar Bernard- 0772 469323**



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