



"Better Skies for Africa"

Novel 2019 Coronavirus: AFRAA Bulletin no. 1, 23 February 2020

Introduction:

AFRAA is involved in multiple forums that are taking place to ensure that information on the Coronavirus is disseminated to all airlines and to the general public in the interest of the wellbeing of all communities. There have been calls for an African position on the Coronavirus based on the extensive trade relations between Africa and China which result in substantial travel between Asia and Africa. AFRAA continues to actively follow the proceedings in order to keep its member airlines and the public well informed.

Update on the virus cases

As of Sunday 23 February, 2020, China had reported 650 new coronavirus cases and 97 more deaths in its daily update on the outbreak, bringing the death toll in mainland China to 2,445, with 77,042 confirmed cases. The majority of deaths and infections are in the Hubei province where Wuhan the epicenter of the outbreak is located.

The Republic of Korea has among the highest number of coronavirus cases outside of mainland China with an estimated number of 602 cases having been confirmed. (Source: China Health Commission; Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, WHO).

The Africa Centre for Disease Control announced that 1 case has been recorded in Egypt as of 20 February, 2020.

Preparedness

The evaluation of the global preparedness for dealing with such an epidemic reveals that emerging economies are the least prepared. This puts Africa amongst the world's most vulnerable continents which needs to make effective preparations. This is even more pressing a need at this moment because all indications are that the current rates of the Coronavirus infections are at the stage where it can be termed as the early stages of a pandemic.

Protection

At this stage there is no specific protection protocol against the virus. Clinical analyses and laboratory tests are on – going at various facilities with the aim of coming up with solutions that include but are not limited to protection against the virus. The health authorities are encouraging exposed communities and those that are likely to come into contact with likely sources of infection to wear protective face masks at all times. The following are the recommendations of the World Health Organisation:

- Frequently wash hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or warm water and soap
- Cover mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when sneezing or coughing
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever or cough





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- Seek early medical help if having fever, cough and difficulty breathing, and share their travel history with healthcare providers
- Avoid direct, unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals when visiting live markets in affected areas
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked animal products and exercise care when handling raw meat, milk or animal organs to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods

Recommended approach

The recommended approach involves 4 steps as follows:

1. Detection – this must be early and quick through screening for temperature, and associated symptoms, to enable informed and decisive action to be taken by the health authorities
2. Treatment – once detected, the infected persons must be quarantined and go through effective and efficient treatment regimes
3. Surveillance – effective, real time tracking and minimizing the spread of the virus
4. Mitigation – track and identify adverse effects clearly

It is accepted that there are resource challenges across the continent which hamper the immediate and effective rollout of the recommended approach. However, by leveraging on the guidance and support of the as well as the collaboration of global institutions such as the World Health Organisation, and the Africa Center for Disease Control.

Role of Industry Players

AFRAA attended the 3 day "Urgent training on enhanced surveillance at the point of entry for the 2019 novel corona virus" which was conducted by the Africa Centre for Disease Control in Nairobi. Important information and material was shared with all the participants to enable the effective monitoring and detection of cases and or potentially risk cases at the port of entry or departure. The following were identified as the key roles of the aviation stakeholders and industry players:

- 1) Improve detection – mostly at the primary and community care level
- 2) Prevention – deploy Artificial Intelligence and big data to predict and prevent outbreaks
- 3) Disease management – use of mobile technology for effective information dissemination and disease management
- 4) Sustainable ongoing Research & Development – particular focus on investment to enhance prevention at care centers and identification areas such as ports of entry

Way forward

The Secretariat will continue to actively engage in industry forums where important information is shared with all parties. Daily updates from the World Health Organization can be accessed through the link: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/> .





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