Event Name: COVID-19  
Country: Liberia

Report Date: 3 March 2020  
Preparedness Start Date: 2 February 2020

Prepared by: National Public Health Institute of Liberia & WHO Liberia Country Office

HIGHLIGHTS

❖ No confirmed COVID-19 case has been reported in the country
  o The negative suspected alert has been discharged following the completion of 14 days observation

❖ Between 25 January to 3 March 2020
  o Over 1500 people have entered Liberia through prioritized PoE in the country
  o 275 travelers quarantined (187 at POCs, 1 Isolation Unit, and 87 outside)
  o 154 travelers have completed 14 days follow up
  o 82 travelers under observation
  o 37 travelers under investigation

❖ WHO supplied the country with reagents for COVID-19 testing
  o Technical team is expected to come in country to provide hands on skills
  o Two senior Laboratory Staff capacity have been built on COVID-19 sample testing

❖ Roberts International Airport capacity developed to screen and identify travelers from countries affected by COVID-19

❖ The Government of Liberia has made available some initial funding for preparedness activities

His Excellency, President George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia demonstrates hand hygiene as preventive measure along with the First Lady, Madam Clair Weah
GLOBAL REFLECTION
❖ As of 3 March 2020 (WHO SitRep # 43), a total of 90,870 cases have been confirmed (1922 new)
❖ China has reported 80,304 confirmed (130 new) including 2,946 deaths (31 new)
❖ Outside of China, 10,566 cases have been confirmed (1792 new) in 72 countries (8 new) including 166 deaths (38 new)
❖ WHO risk assessment: China (Very High), Regional Level (Very High), Global Level (Very High)

COUNTRY CONTEXT
Liberia has not reported any confirmed case of COVID-19. In order to limit human-to-human transmission among travelers from affected countries, Liberia with support from partners is investing in preparedness efforts for early potential case detection at PoEs, infection prevention and control measures, precautionary observation of travelers from affected countries, isolation and management of suspected COVID-19 cases are instituted; while communicating critical risk and event information to all communities and community engagement among others.

The country has heightened surveillance at the 54 prioritized points of entry including Roberts International Airport (RIA), Freeport of Monrovia, Bo water side ground crossing point in Grand Cape Mount County, Ganta Border, located in Nimba County, and Buchanan port in Grand Bassa County, among others. There is no travel restriction entry has been imposed by the government of the Republic of Liberia as recommended by WHO Liberia country Office, however the country as of 2 February 2020 started applying a compulsory 14 day precautionary observation measures for travelers from China and other countries with high transmission of the COVID-19 disease.

Despite Liberia not having direct travel link to China, the high number of Liberia business community, students and other people travelling to and from China places the country at risk for potential outbreak of COVID-19

LIBERIA PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES BEING TAKEN
Coordination
- Coordination system has been established to oversee an integrated technical or operational preparedness to a potential 2019 Coronavirus outbreak in Liberia with the Minister of Health having oversight role for the management of the preparedness and chairs the strategic leadership meeting with heads of funding and technical institutions
- The Acting Director General of NPHIL Dr. Mosoka Fallah severs as the Liberia COVID-19 preparedness Incident Manager with delegated authority to take all relevant decisions, set the priorities, objectives, and strategies to be followed. Coordination meetings chaired by DG-ai -NPHIL are held every Tuesday and Friday at the Nation Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (NPHEOC) with eight (8) thematic pillars being activated to enhance preparedness
- Strong links are maintained with the NMDA that operates under four cluster (coordination, health, food and nutrition, Shelter and non-food) and leads the multi-agency coordination including local authorities that meet once weekly (Thursday) at the NDMA office, Monrovia
The House of representatives, One UN, and other stakeholders are briefed on preparedness efforts. At the **sub national level**, all the 15 County health teams have activated similar thematic pillars as national level chaired by the County Health Officers (CHOs).

### Surveillance
- The country has adapted WHO seven training modules including the case definition for COVID-19.
- Trained 17 County Surveillance Officers and 15 County Health Officers on COVID-19.
- Developed surveillance SOP for travelers and contacts monitoring, case identification and data management.
- Developed and disseminated standard and community case definitions for the COVID-19 with all 15 county health teams.

### Points of Entry
- Fifty-one (51) personnel trained at RIA.
- Trained forty-two (42) border party personnel in Maryland County.
- PoEs reporting and screening tools developed for heightened surveillance and documentation of travelers at POEs and disseminated to the 15 counties.
- A total of 275 travelers screened from affected countries and line listed for follow-up:
  - 220 travelers residing in Montserrado.
  - 52 travelers residing in Margibi.
  - 3 travelers residing in Nimba.
  - 82 travelers currently in POCs.
  - 105 travelers completed 14 days in the POCs.
  - 48 completed 14 days outside of the POCs.

### Case Management/IPC
- Redemption Hospital INSITU is the only available treatment site with nine (9) bed capacity.
- Preparation of Isolation and treatment unit under review.
- Currently no case in Isolation.
- Ongoing IPC mentorship to POCs and health facilities.
- IPC assessment tool has been developed.
- Concept note for Rapid IPC assessment in health facilities in Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa have been developed.
- Red cross staff to be trained in case management.
IPC/Case Management SOPs for POCs and Isolation/Treatment Units

- Five (5) precautionary observation centers (POCs) established as of 2 March 2020
  - These POCs are catering to eighty-two (82) travelers that are currently being monitored while one hundred five (105) travelers have completed 14 days follow-up
  - None of the travelers presenting with sign or symptoms across all of POCs

- Wifi has been installed at POC 5
- Televisions have been installed in twenty-five (25) of twenty-seven (27) rooms for travelers at POC 5
- Air conditioners donated by National Port Authority and not yet installed at the POC 5
- Alert case has gone over 14 days of admission and discharge out of isolation to seek further case

Laboratory

- Sample collection materials in country (Dacron swab 150 and VTM 50 procured by GoL/NPHIL; awaiting 1000 swabs and 1000 VTM due to arrive shortly)
- Validation of COVID-19 panel brought from Institute Pasteur Dakar completed
- Calibration for back up PCR machine in progress and PCR training due after calibration in the coming days
- One staff from NRL completed diagnostic training of coronavirus at the Institute Pasteur Dakar, Senegal
- Rollout training is scheduled for diagnosis of coronavirus in the coming days
- Request for additional reagents and VTM submitted to test for COVID-19 diagnosis in country
- The IRR registration process completed and submitted request for other reagents to include measles/rubella, etc....

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Strategic plans for community engagement on Coronavirus Risk Communication preparedness rollout by Technical Working Group continuing
- Distribution of IEC Material is at a standstill due to stock out
- A total of 1860 pieces COVID-19 poster distributed; 1845 pieces of flyers distributed, and 2300 pieces COVID-19 brochure distributed
- New request for IEC materials on COVID-19 sent to AFENET for production
- Various MOH & NPHIL Social media platforms continued to be activated to undercut rumors and provide accurate information on the Coronavirus.
- Media relations on continuing sensitization of the COVID-19 continuing
- Standard Operating Procedures for Risk Communication is reviewed by Technical Working Group and validation schedule is being validated on Wednesday, March 4, 2020
- Undercutting of rumors on Coronavirus emergence in Liberia continuing
- Coronavirus audio messages translation into 16 local Liberia dialects are being produced for airing
- Coronavirus preparedness and ToT orientation for three counties (Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa) with support from Mittal Steel submitted to Mittal Steel
- Health massages dissemination continuing by mHero
**WASH and Dead Body Management**

- This pillar is led by the National WASH commission
- Conducted the assessment of two POCs (POC 1 and 5)
- There is monitoring and enforcement of mandatory hands washing hygiene by the WASH commission
- A total of 750 buckets and 250 pieces were donated by Oxfam to Government of Liberia for COVID-19 preparedness

**Logistics and Supplies**

- The country has established the current stock balances of IPC materials and other necessary materials across the country, including supplies from partners
- Assessment of Disco Hill facility was done
  - PPE/Tyvet hood - (1x100) = 2800 boxes
  - Tyvet PPE coverall - (1x40) = 544 cartoons
  - Face Shield - (1x250) = 12 cartoons
  - Ultraviolet light - 2 pieces
  - Water Storage - 2 pieces
  - Assorted supplies from the ELWA ETU
- FLB assessment conducted in Gbarnag, Bong County and Voinjama, Lofa County
  - PPE Coverall - (1x25) = 1686 cartoons/42150 pieces
  - Household Kits - (1x3) = 47 cartoons
  - PPE hood - (1x25) = 5090 cartons
  - Heavy Duty Gloves - (1x72) = 81 cartons
  - Biohazard Bags - (1x200) = 1366 cartons
  - N95 Mask - (1x160) = 994 cartons
  - Face Shield - 175 cartons
  - Thermal Box - 18 boxes
  - Protective Reusable Face Shield
  - Hand Sprayer - (1x12) = 7 cartons
- These supplies have all been expired since 2018/2019
- Assessment of National Reference Laboratory
  - PPE coverall Tyvet - (1x25) = 120 cartoons
  - Nose Mask N95 - (1x20) = 18 boxes

**GAPS and PROPOSED FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

**Current Gaps:**
- Inadequate funds to meet the budgeted preparedness activities
- Lack of specimen’s collection Materials for COVID-19 and viral transport medium
- Inadequate IPC supplies, emergency medical drugs and equipment
- Ensuring POC-5 capacity is built to host up to 100 travelers
- Capacity building of POE staff from all 54 prioritized POEs and establishment of holding facilities
- Training of health workers in IPC and case management at subnational level
- Follow up with WHO on specimen collection materials and expert to train NRL staff for COVID-19 testing
Propose follow up Actions:
❖ Mobilize needed resources
❖ Community engagement on IPC
❖ Translation of risk communication massages in local dialects and media practitioner’s orientation

SUCCESS STORY and BEST PRACTICES

The government of Liberia has showed commitment to the preparedness efforts up to the executive level, with the president leading the way in advocating for routine hand hygiene as one of the key preventive measures for COVID-19. Additionally, Government of Liberia has made an initial release of 200,000 USD for the preparedness activities.

Updated on March 4, 2020 at 6:30 pm Liberia Local Time

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