

## COVID-19 Preparedness activities in Rwanda 27 February - 06 March 2020.

### Introduction

WHO declared the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a public health event of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020. The risk is currently evaluated as very high globally and international cooperation is crucial to effectively combating COVID-19.

No case of Coronavirus has been reported in Rwanda so far. The Government of Rwanda has set up a multidisciplinary team to assess and strengthen preparedness and response to the epidemic.

Rwanda introduced stepped up detection at our borders. The Government of Rwanda has implemented strict quarantine procedures and strengthened existing healthcare system to respond to current situation.

The country has put in place preparedness and response mechanisms to deal with a possible outbreak, including below preventative measures:

- Hand wash regularly using clean water and soap or use sanitizers to avoid contamination
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth and handshakes
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid unnecessary travel to affected countries
- If you have a history of travel in affected countries and present one of the following symptoms – fever, cough, running nose, sore throat – please contact 114 for more information.
- Rwanda has strengthened its surveillance and prevention measures at all points of entry, health facilities, public places and in the community.

### Highlights of Current Global COVID-19 Outbreak as of 05/03/2020

- Total affected countries: 85
- Cumulative number of cases: 95,333 confirmed (2,241 new)
- Cumulative recovery cases: 55,807 recovered/discharged
- Cumulative death: 3,282 deaths (84 new)

### Coordination and Leadership

- Activation of the national taskforce for COVID-19 prevention and response;
- Activation of the national technical coordination team (Incident Management System/IMS) for the prevention and response

- Development and dissemination of the first version of COVID-19 guidelines and SOPs to guide response teams, health facilities and partners
- Activation of district taskforce for COVID-19, ensuring coordination at district level
- Development of national preparedness plan

## Surveillance

### Surveillance at Points of Entry

- The Rwanda Biomedical Centre established health screening points at 31 points of entry (Kigali International Airport and 30 land and water border entries)
- The cumulative number of people screened is 1,400,859 at land borders and 61,209 screened at Kigali International Airport (KIA) from 27<sup>th</sup> January – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Surveillance screening documents were developed to guide health care workers. These include: case definition, screening algorithm, case investigation form and contact tracing standard operating documents.

## Laboratory

- The National reference laboratory (NRL) has been upgraded to test COVID-19 since early February, 2020 in partnership with Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Germany; The USA Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.
- NRL has been able to run cumulatively over 900 tests for COVID-19 and all were tested negative.
- 12 laboratory technicians from NRL were successfully trained as trainers and continued to provide trainings to over 32 lab technicians from District satellite laboratories for sample collection and management.

## Case Management, Infection, Prevention & Control (IPC)

- RBC trained 219 health care providers (Medical Doctors, Laboratory Technicians, environmental health and nurses) from all hospitals in Rwanda.

## Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- National awareness campaigns are widely implemented using all communication channels available such as Radio, TV, meetings, social media channels, etc.
- COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages are being sent through SMS to all phone holders registered to national telecommunication companies
- The existing call center 114 activated to include COVID-19 and operators numbers to continue increase according to the epidemic dynamics.

## Logistics

- Hospital capacities for holding, isolation cases is being upgraded and quarantine and treatment sites identified and being upgraded.