



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**PRESS STATEMENT ON THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS OUBREAK IN
CHINA, 22 JANUARY 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

1. Background

The Ministry of Health and Social Services herewith confirms that we received information regarding the outbreak of Novel (or New) Coronavirus called (2019-nCOV) that was confirmed on 9th January 2020 in the city of Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province in China after a series of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause were reported. The disease is characterised by fever, cough and difficulties in breathing.

As of 22 January 2020 (19h00) local time confirmed cases in China stood at 473 with 9 deaths. Only three Provinces out of 23 did not report a case in China, all the other provinces reported. The outbreak spread to countries outside China and the following countries were affected.

	Confirmed Cases	Suspected Cases
Japan	1	
Thailand	4	
Korea	1	15
Singapore		7
Philippines		4
USA	1	
Australia		1
Mexico		1

The Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing mild respiratory illnesses (common colds) in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. This (2019-nCOV) outbreak has been linked to a local market selling chicken, cats, marmots, other wild animals and seafood that has been closed since 01/01/2020 for cleaning and disinfection. The spread of this outbreak is mainly human-to-human (from an infected person to others) through respiratory secretions.

2. Ministry of Health and Social Services Interventions

The World Health Organization has called on countries to strengthen prevention and control measures for 2019-nCOV. In response to WHO's call, Namibia has initiated measures to protect the general public.

- a) Alert messages were sent to all Regions, including general information on the disease as well as guidance on case management and surveillance.
- b) Health facilities both (public & private) as well as laboratories are informed to strengthen case detection, diagnosis and management of all possible cases.
- c) Close monitoring of the situation, with intensified surveillance is underway, especially at the main international ports of entry to ensure prompt case detection and response.

3. The general public is advised to adhere to the following measures as part of prevention

- Regular hand washing with soap and water,
- Covering mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or cloth when coughing or sneezing. Travellers with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette and limit contact with others,
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing, keep a distance of one step (meter).
- Minimise or avoid public gatherings.
- Thorough cooking of meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- Drink plenty of fluids and exercise.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands if in contact with sick person or with potentially infected surfaces or objects.
- People should seek immediate treatment if infection is suspected, if symptoms occur (*severe flu-like illness with recent travel history to China in the past 14 days or contact with person from China who is reported to be infected with the 2019-nCoV*) or advised by health worker, and
- Based on currently available information, **World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend any restriction of travel or trade.**

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