

Press Release on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

9th March 2020: The Government of Maldives has confirmed a total of four positive cases for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

Two expatriate workers from Kuredu Island Resort were the first two laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Maldives and was reported on 7th March 2020. Two more foreign nationals staying at Sandies Bathala Resort have been confirmed on 9th March 2020.

All patients have been placed under isolation, receiving appropriate medical treatment. All four patients are reported to be recovering well.

WHO has been working closely with the Ministry of Health to prepare for such a scenario and is closely monitoring the situation in Maldives with the Ministry of Health to assess risks, immediate and intermediate needs for screening, contact tracing, testing of suspected cases and treating those who are affected.

To date; WHO has provided 10 COVID-19 testing kits, enabling in-country sample testing for 1000 samples, in addition to 250 Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Kits to further strengthen the health system preparedness and response to COVID19.

With WHO's support, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) laboratory has been equipped with the testing COVID19 testing kits, and its laboratory staff trained to test and diagnose COVID19. WHO has shared various technical guidance and extended support in risk communication activities and training for staff and volunteers.

"I take this opportunity to commend and applaud the numerous concerted efforts taken by Ministry of Health, Government and non-government counterparts, partnering agencies and associations. It is important that we ensure the activities planned and preparedness measures that have already been put in place are implemented immediately following confirmation of cases." said Dr Arvind Mathur, WHO Representative.

WHO Maldives reiterates advice to the public to remain calm and maintain personal hygiene measures. As a close-knit society, we're all responsible for reducing our own risk of infection, and that of our community's. Simple preventive measures that everyone can adopt to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, include:

- Frequently washing hands using clean running water and soap, or alcohol-based hand rub
- When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw used tissue away immediately and wash hands
- Refrain from spitting in public places
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough
- If you have fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, stay at home (self-isolate) to protect others, and seek medical care early. Share travel history and previous contact with any known or suspected COVID-19 patients with your health care provider.

- Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by Health Protection Agency and WHO Maldives on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Call 1676 for more information and queries.

The fight against rumors and misinformation is a vital part of the battle against this virus. As WHO, we rely on individuals and media to ensure people have accurate information about any threats they face, and how to protect themselves and others.

This global epidemic can be pushed back, but only with a collective, coordinated and comprehensive approach that engages the entire machinery of the government; as Maldives has thus been doing so.

WHO is calling on every country to act with speed, scale and clear-minded determination. This is not just a threat for individual people, or individual countries. We're all in this together, and we can only save lives together.

WHO as a trusted partner is committed to support the Government of Maldives and partners to implement effective measures to protect the health of all people.

More information

For Local updates, please visit WHO Maldives website:

[https://www.who.int/maldives/news/detail/31-01-2020-updates-on-novel-corona-virus-\(COVID-19\)](https://www.who.int/maldives/news/detail/31-01-2020-updates-on-novel-corona-virus-(COVID-19))

For Global Situation information, please visit WHO website:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

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