

Situation Update - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

WHO Country Office for Nepal

20 April 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has announced 31 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of 19 April 2020.
- WHO Country Office fully repurposed for COVID-19 response with the activation of the Incident Management System.
- Guidelines/SOPs/tools contextualized to the country and disseminated, and their implementation supported for effective surveillance; case investigation; laboratory testing; contact tracing; case detection, isolation and management; infection prevention & control; risk and media communication and community engagement; rational use of Personal Protective Equipment; requirements of drugs and equipment for case management and public health interventions; continuity of essentials services; and training and capacity building on all critical aspects of COVID-19 preparedness and response.
- Call center with toll free four-digit hotline number (1115) established for the Epidemiology & Disease Control Division to address COVID-19 related questions from the public and follow up of the health status of asymptomatic returnees and contacts of cases in quarantine.
- Local language Public Service Announcements on COVID-19 developed and disseminated.
- Questionnaires / Checklists and automated data collection tool for Rapid Assessment of Infection Prevention and Control, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Health Care Waste Management and Clinical Management Readiness developed and initiated in three designated COVID-19 hospitals in Kathmandu in collaboration with UNICEF and GIZ for nation-wide roll out.
- RT-PCR kits for 2500 tests supplied to NPHL and 1646 full sets of PPE provided to MoHP through the facilitation of the regional office; direct financial contributions made to different entities of the Department of Health Services and the MoHP for enhancing response capabilities
- Health Cluster formally activated at central and provincial levels and cluster coordination, information sharing weekly meetings facilitated.
- Collaboration and partnerships with development partners enhanced and additional in-country resources mobilized to support the preparedness and response interventions of the government
- Development and finalization of the Country Health Response Plan spearheaded by the MoHP and the Country Preparedness and Response Plan facilitated by the UNCT supported.
- Additional national and international personnel with the requisite expertise recruited and deployed internally and to support the MoHP at the central and the MoSD at the provincial levels for effective COVID-19 surge response.
- Crisis Management Team formed to coordinate the UN response

SITUATION OVERVIEW

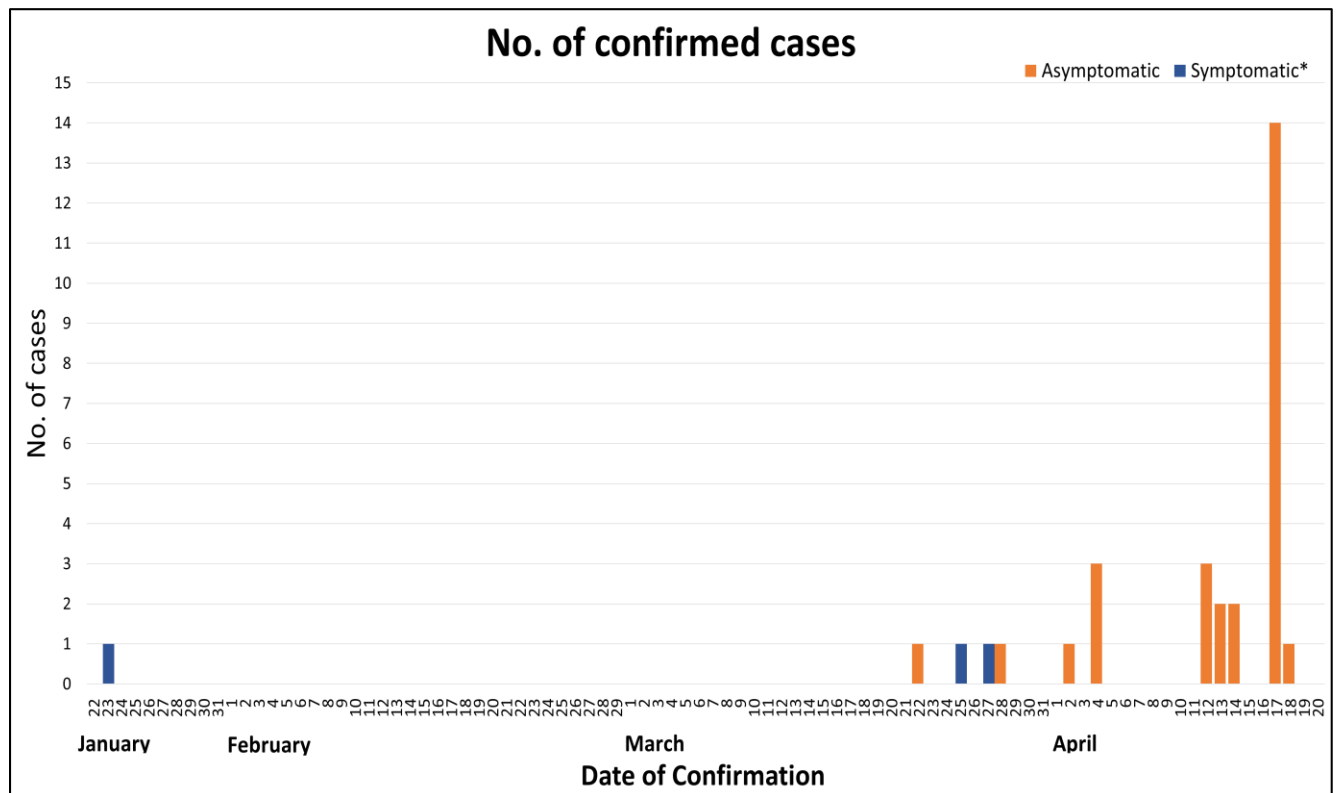
(Total and new cases reported up to 19 April 2020)

31 confirmed (1 new)
0 deaths (0 new)
4 recovered (3 new)
8,081 RT-PCR tests

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

Figure 1A: Epidemic curve of laboratory confirmed COVID-19, by date of diagnosis

(Data updated till 19th Apr 2020)



*At the time of detection.

Figure 1B: Cumulative case count by province (complementing daily incidence shown above)

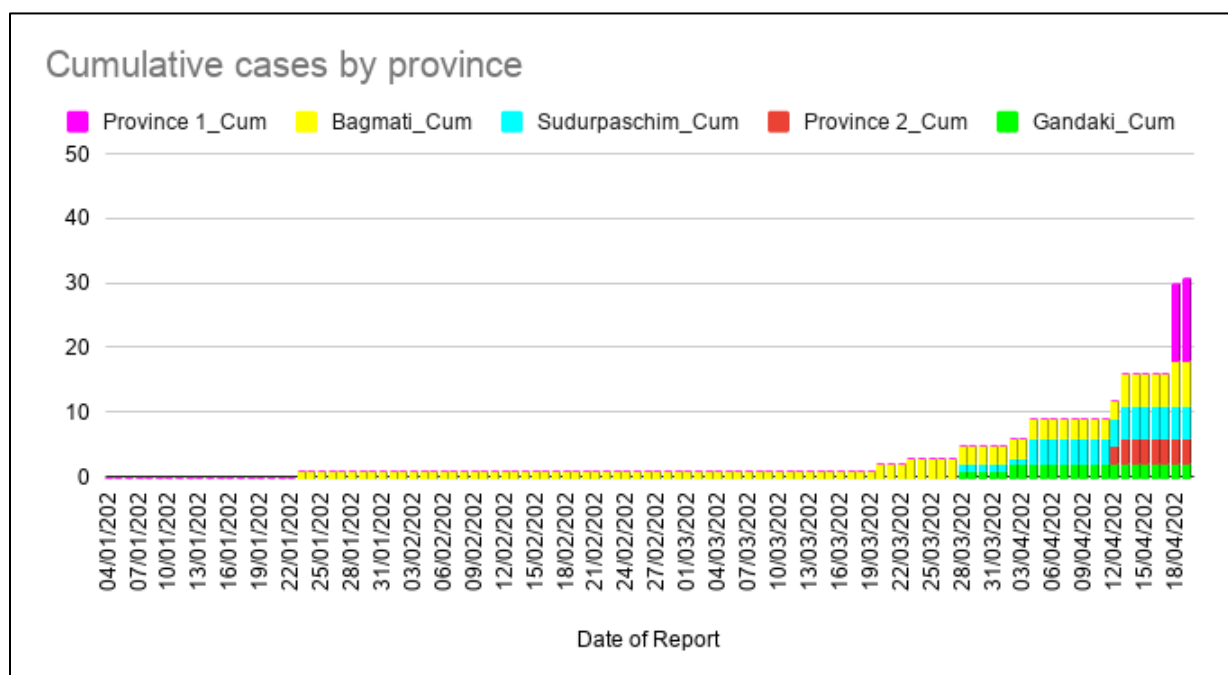


Table 1: Provinces with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths.

(Data updated till 19th April 2020)

Transmission classification based on [WHO definitions](#)

Reporting Province	Total confirmed new cases in the reporting week	Total confirmed cumulative cases	Total new deaths in the reporting week	Total cumulative deaths	Transmission classification*	Days since last reported case
Province 1	13	13	0	0	Cluster of cases	1
Province 2	1	4	0	0	Cluster of cases	6
Bagmati	4	7	0	0	Sporadic cases	2
Gandaki	0	2	0	0	Sporadic cases	17
Province 5	0	0	0	0	No cases	0
Karnali	0	0	0	0	No cases	0
Sudurpaschhim	1	5	0	0	Sporadic cases	6
National Total	19	31	0	0		

* Case classification is based on [WHO transmission classification](#)

No cases- provinces with no cases

Sporadic cases- provinces with one or more cases, imported or locally detected

Cluster of cases- provinces experiencing cases, clustered in time, geographic location and/or by common exposures

Community transmission- experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission defined through an assessment of factors including, but not limited to:

- Large numbers of cases not linkable to transmission chains
- Large numbers of cases from sentinel lab surveillance
- Multiple unrelated clusters in several areas of the country/territory/area

Figure 2: Municipalities with reported laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases

(Data updated till 19th April 2020)

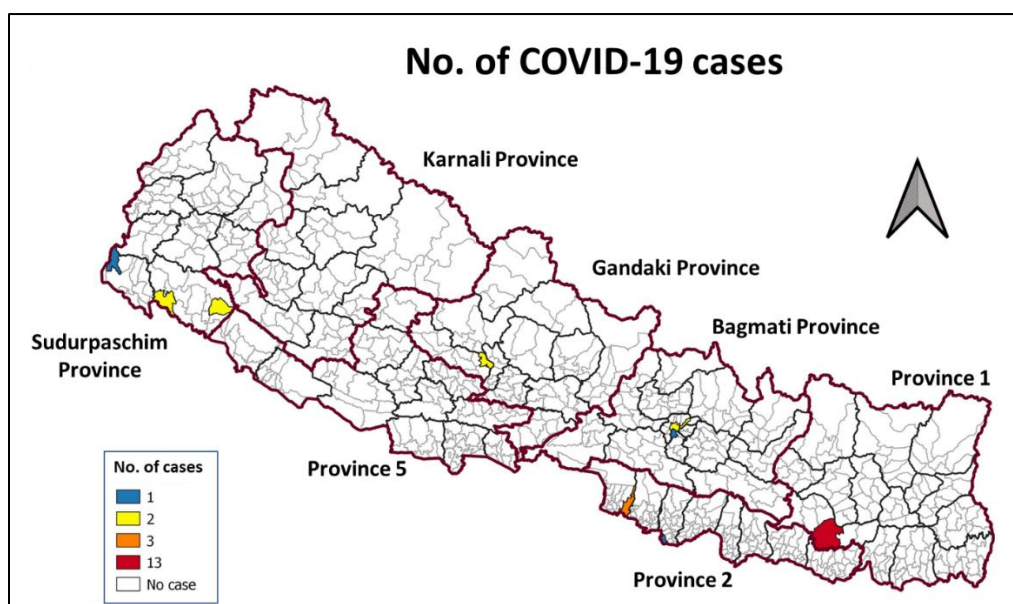
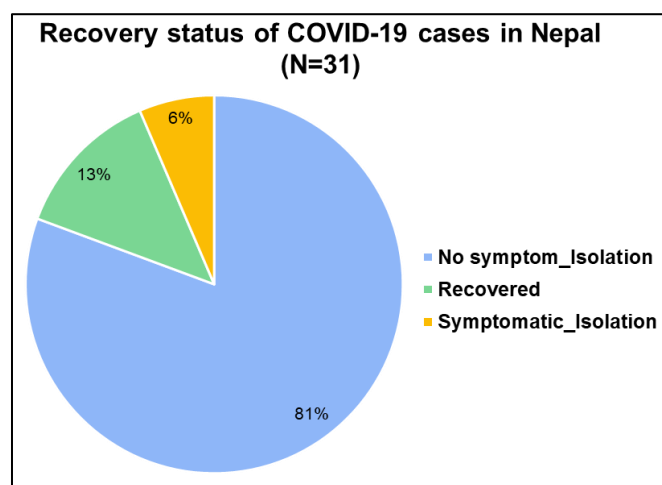
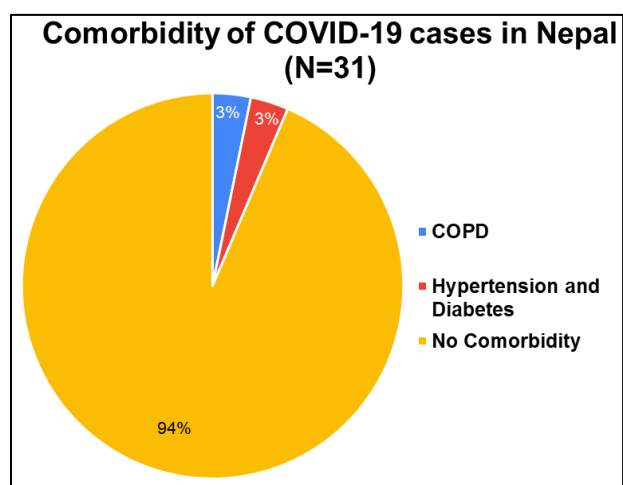
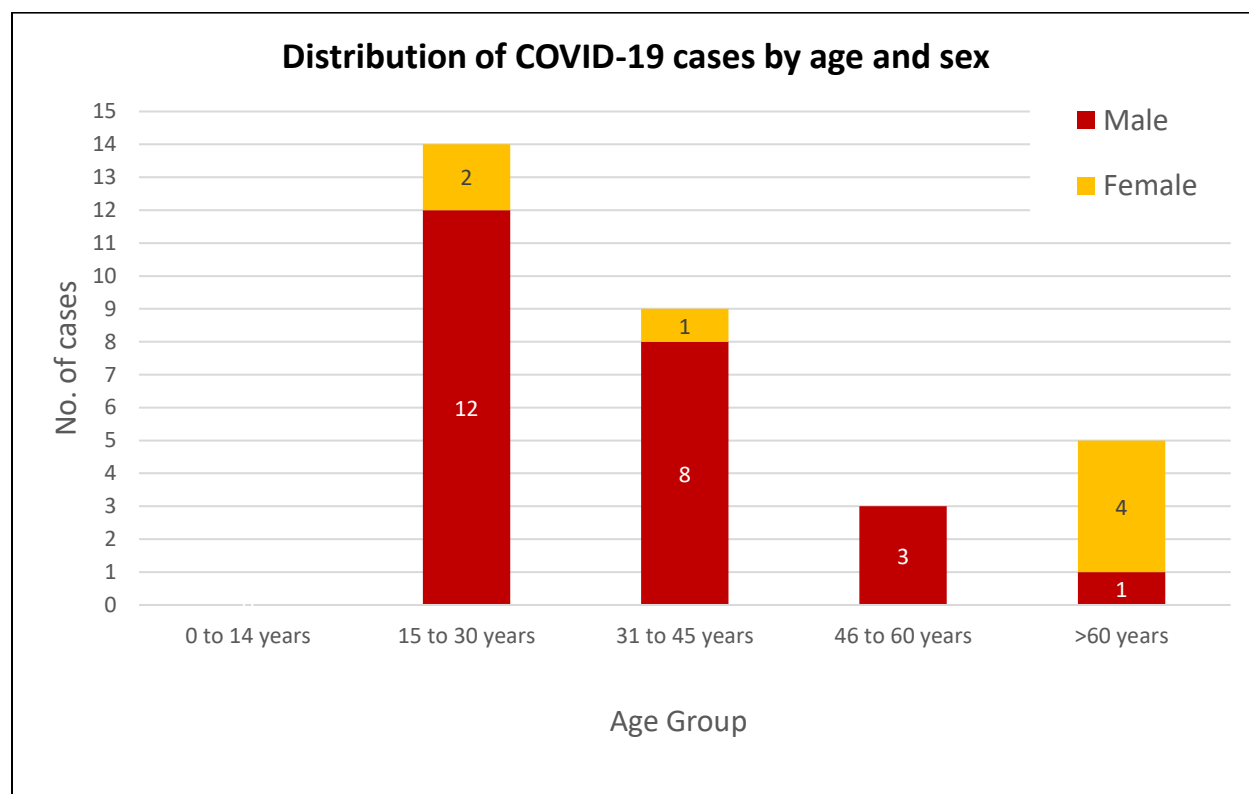


Figure 3:

Epidemiological characteristics of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 (Data updated till 19th April 2020)



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

What Government of Nepal (GoN) and MoHP is doing?

- A high-level coordination committee for COVID-19 prevention and control in Nepal was formed under the coordination of honorable deputy prime minister and defense minister on 1st March 2020. High level inter-ministerial Committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister has been re-structured as the Corona Crisis Management Centre (CCMC).
- The Incident Command System of the MoHP has been activated for COVID-19 response.
- GoN, on 23rd March 2020, taking cognizance of the evolving global situation and recourse to the Infectious Disease Act 2020, decided to lockdown the country effective from 24th March until 31st March 2020. The lockdown is now extended until 27th April 2020.
- Toll-free COVID- 19 hotlines with 24-hour access through 1133 and access from 6 am to 10 pm through 1115 which is attached to a call center have been established.
- A clinical management protocol has been developed and issued by the MoHP.
- On 13th April, 127 hospitals across all provinces have been designated as COVID-19 clinics with responsibility to triage, isolate and arrange for the testing of suspected COVID-19 cases; 13 hospitals as Level 1 hospitals for the management mild confirmed cases; 12 hospitals for the management of moderate to severe cases of COVID-19; and 3 hospitals for specialized surgical services and multi-specialty care.
- Seven teams from central level to deployed to the provinces for technical guidance and facilitation of coordination between the federal and local government with logistic support; one senior official of the MoHP also mobilized to each of the seven the provinces to facilitate response readiness and additional medical doctors deployed to specific provinces to assist in management of case surges.
- Regular dissemination of Sitreps by the Health Emergency Operations Center (HEOC); daily virtual press briefings by MoHP spokesperson; briefings to cluster partners and external development partners being done by relevant officials of the MOHP regularly.
- Guidelines/SOPs/tools for COVID-19 surveillance; case investigation; laboratory testing; contact tracing; case detection, isolation and management; infection prevention & control; risk & media communication and community engagement; rational use of Personal Protective Equipment; requirements of drugs and equipment for case management and public health interventions; and continuity of essentials services developed and disseminated.
- Case Investigation and Contact Tracing of the all the confirmed COVID-19 Cases with support from various stakeholders.
- To expand testing facilities outside of the Kathmandu Valley, a total of 10 COVID-19 testing centers have been made functional for performing RT PCR tests in the provinces.
- MoHP has recently distributed 1000 sets of PPEs and additional masks, gloves and sanitizers to each of the seven provinces.
- A Health Response Plan is being drafted and currently under review.

What is WHO Country Office for Nepal doing?

- WHO Nepal is working closely with the MoHP COVID-19 preparedness and response in the country by providing technical guidance, sharing information on key developments and scientific updates.
- All technical and administrative staff of WHO Nepal have been re-purposed for COVID-19 response and several have been placed at different entities of the MoHP at national level; all the field personnel at provincial level are supporting the Provincial Health Directorates in response.
- Engagement of a domestic courier service for NPHL for sample shipment from all districts of Nepal and enabling sample shipment using alternative arrangements during the lock-down.
- Regular technical guidance on use of RDTs; strategies for expanded testing and other technical developments across the globe that could enhance testing in Nepal.
- Support to conduct quality assurance for the COVID-19 test results by National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) via shipment to WHO Collaborating Center- Hongkong; and enrollment of NPHL into the WHO EQAS for COVID-19.
- WHO Nepal also supports the UN COVID-19 response in the country and provides relevant information and advice to UN staff in Nepal.
- Active support for case investigation and contact tracing with training and orientation in close coordination with the Epidemiology & Disease Control Division (EDCD) and provinces.
- Support to EDCD and other surveillance and response actors of the MoHP at the central level and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) at provincial level for enhanced COVID-19 surveillance including at the Points of Entry (international airport and ground-crossings) through recruitment, training and deployment of 17 COVID-19 Surveillance Associates and other support mechanisms.
- Support to EDCD with trained human resources for functioning of the call center on COVID-19.
- Support to National Health Education Information Communication Center (NHEICC) for translation, validation and dissemination of messages and guidelines by WHO and other UN agencies including radio PSA/ Scripts/ Animations/ Video/ Jingles.
- Development and dissemination of media responses, media monitoring and engagement and support to MoHP for press briefings in collaboration with UNICEF.
- Support to National Health Training Center (NHTC) in developing training material and mechanisms for virtual trainings in collaboration with UNICEF.

What partners are doing?

- Partners are fully engaged in the COVID-19 response in a structured manner since the formal activation of the Health Cluster on 9th April 2020, led by the IMS - MoHP and co-led by WHO
- All information on partners' support is being channeled through one door mechanism - the COVID-19 Donor Coordination Matrix maintained by the Chair of the External Development Partners (EDP) and used as the single information source to track Health Cluster support
- All sub-clusters of the Health Cluster are functioning with regular meetings and critical issues are being fed into the Health Cluster meeting for information and deliberation
- All partners are working together to address the Key Asks of the MoHP such as: testing, risk communication, procurement and supplies, case management support, one door information sharing, service continuity, integrated approaches, quarantine facilities, prevention of community transmission, etc. in coordinated manner
- A Country Preparedness and Response Plan has been drafted by the UN, incorporating needs by the UN and partner agencies. The Plan has been shared with government and donors

WHO's STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The overarching goal is to control the pandemic by slowing down the transmission and reducing mortality associated with COVID-19. The global strategic objectives are as follows:

- **Mobilize** all sectors and communities to ensure that every sector of government and society takes ownership of and participates in the response and in preventing cases through hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and individual-level physical distancing.
- **Control** sporadic cases & clusters and prevent community transmission by rapidly finding and isolating all cases, providing them with appropriate care, and tracing, quarantining, and supporting all contacts.
- **Suppress** community transmission through context-appropriate infection prevention and control measures, population level physical distancing measures, and appropriate and proportionate restrictions on non-essential domestic and international travel.
- **Reduce** mortality by providing appropriate clinical care for those affected by COVID-19, ensuring continuity of essential health & social services; protecting frontline workers & vulnerable populations.
- **Develop** safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics that can be delivered at scale and that are accessible based on need.

RECOMMENDATION AND ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

If you are not in an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not travelled from an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not been in contact with a COVID-19 case, your risk of infection is low. It is understandable that you may feel anxious about the outbreak. Get the facts from reliable sources to help you accurately determine your risks so that you can take reasonable precautions. Seek guidance from WHO, your healthcare provider, your health authority or your employer for accurate information on COVID-19 and whether COVID-19 is circulating where you live. It is important to be informed of the situation and take appropriate measures to protect yourself and your family.

If you are in an area where there are cases of COVID-19, you need to take the risk of infection seriously. Follow the advice of WHO and guidance issued by national, provincial and local health authorities. For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal. Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.

For detailed information please visit the WHO [site](#).

USEFUL LINKS

- Regular updates on MoHP Nepal's COVID-19 updates (including situation reports) and resources available [here](#);
- Algorithm to suspect COVID-19 infection based on WHO surveillance case definition can be found [here](#);
- For global WHO situation report, please visit this [site](#);
- Global coronavirus disease situation dashboard can be found [here](#);
- For information regarding coronavirus disease from WHO, please visit [here](#)
- Visit WHO Nepal webpage on COVID-19 [here](#).

CONTACT DETAILS:

WHO Representative

Dr Jos Vandelaer

WHO Representative to Federal
Democratic Republic of Nepal
WHO County Office for Nepal
Contact No.: +977 - 9801 021 717
Email: vandelaerjo@who.int

Health Cluster Co-lead

Dr Lungten Z. Wangchuk

Scientist; Team Lead - CDS
WHO Country Office
Contact No.: +977 - 9801 246 686
Email: wangchukl@who.int

WHO Incident Manager

Dr Reuben Samuel

Team Leader - WHO Health
Emergencies Programme (WHE)
Contact No.: +977 - 9801 010 010
Email: samuelr@who.int

Communication/Media Focal Point

Mr. Sujan G. Amatya

Communications Officer
Contact No.: +977 -9818 239 744
Email: samatya@who.int