

Virtual Fourth Health Cluster Coordination Meeting
Kathmandu, Nepal
30 April 2020 -THURSDAY (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Gunaraj Lohani, Lead of the Health Cluster and co-chaired by Dr. Lungten Z. Wangchuk, Co-lead of the Health Cluster. Health coordination team from all the Provinces were also included in the meeting. A total of 103 members participated in the meeting virtually. Dr. Khem Karki, advisor to Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health and Population and Dr. Samir Kumar Adhikari, Chief of HEOC also attended the meeting along with the chair and the co-chair (List of on-site and virtual participants attached). Dr. Samir Kumar Adhikari facilitated the meeting.

AGENDA for 4th Health Cluster Coordination Meeting 30th APRIL 2020	
TIME	AGENDA ITEMS
14:00 To 15:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome Remarks: Dr Gunaraj Lohani, Chair/Lead 2. Update from MOHP - Dr Gunaraj Lohani Chair/Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of last meeting's decisions/action points ➤ Updates 3. Provincial Update – (Province 1-7) 4. Partners presentation - Dr Lungten Wangchuk, Co-Chair 5. Quick update from partners if not covered by Co-chair's presentation 6. Comments from Advisors, MOHP 7. Any additional comments by Chair and Advisors 8. AOB

Synopsis of the meeting:

Dr. Gunaraj Lohani, the Chair welcomed all the participants and provided the brief update from MOHP. Dr. Lohani provided the updates on policy, status of laboratory status testing, risk communication, information sharing, COVID-19 surveillance, contact tracing, Infection Prevention and Control measures, COVID-19 case management, and logistics and supply.

The details of tests and isolation/quarantine of COVID-19 cases as of 29 April 2020 were provided:

Dr. Lohani also informed about the different guidelines and pocket book for clinical case management endorsed in the past week and formation of an expert team for Clinical Decision Analysis (CDA) for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.

As of 29 April 2020

Total PCR sites: 16 (Rapati Academy of Health Sciences newly added)
Total PCR tests done: 11524 (average of 358 per day in past week)
Total PCR positive: 57
Total active cases: 41
Total discharged: 16 (9 in past week)
Total RDT performed: 45665 (average of 2035 per day in past week)
Total isolation beds: 2954
Total people in isolation: 87
Total quarantine beds: 48466
Total people in quarantine: 22901

Guidelines that has been endorsed in the past week are:

- “Interim Guideline for the Establishment and Operationalization of Molecular Laboratory for COVID-19 Testing in Nepal”
- “A standard protocol on the mobilization of non-military aircraft for COVID-19 management”
- A guideline on “Safety measures to be followed at the point of entry (import) in the context of COVID-19 pandemic-2020”
- “Ayurveda and Alternative Medicine Guidelines of Preventive Measures and Management Protocol for COVID-19 in Nepal”

Dr. Lohani also stated that case investigation, contact tracing, rapid assessment and community inspection are being carried out by health personnel’s team from the federal level, health team of the provincial level and WHO in every province.

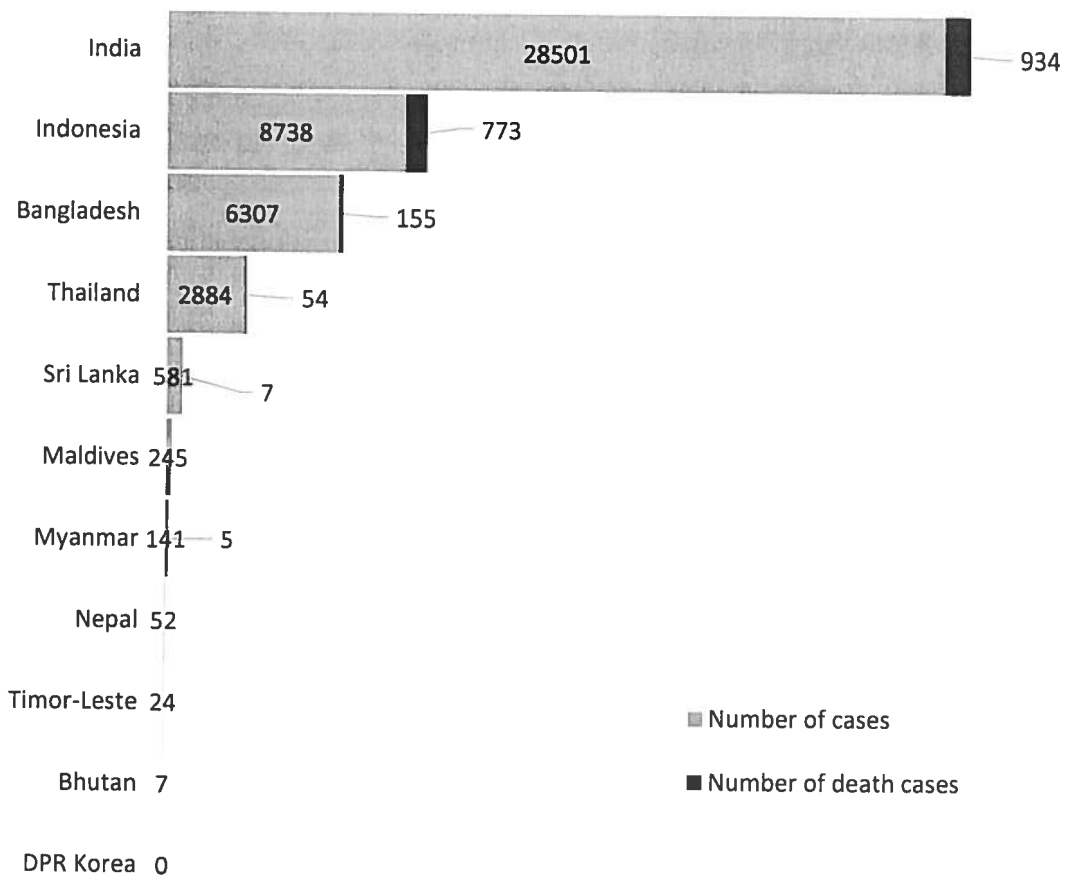
After his updates, Dr. Lohani opened the floor for different provinces to provide with their updates, issues, needs, way forward and any innovate ideas for management of COVID-19 in the respective provinces. Directors from Provincial Health Directorates briefly explained on what they are doing, what are the current needs to manage the COVID-19 and the way forward for them. The major queries, expectations and challenges put forward from the provinces were as follows:

- Clarity on use of RDT
- Clarity on the definition of different terms used and the proper guideline for contact tracing
- Clear guidelines for quarantine and isolation
- Clear guidelines for resumption of immunization services and continuity basic health services for Communicable diseases, NCDs, RMNACH, etc.
- Issues related to Logistics for laboratory (VTM and swab sticks) in low supply



- Limited human resources for COVID-19 management/treatment
- Inter-ministerial coordination (MOHP, MOHA, MOFAGA) for clear and effective implementation of directives

Following the updates from provinces, Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-chair presented the comparative situation of COVID-19 in different countries in South East Asia, the Nepal situation and contribution from partners and stressed on the need for all partners in continuing to support COVID-19 response in Nepal. r. She also provided updates and recommendations from sub-clusters (Mental Health and Reproductive Health) and challenges in service continuing essential health services for Communicable Diseases, NCDs, Mental Health, RMNACH, etc. during COVID-19 response and urged for continuation of these services as per the guidelines issued by the MoHP.



Dr. Khem Karki, advisor to Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health and Population provided following responses to different queries raised by all the provinces.

- Regarding all COVID-19 cases reported as asymptomatic, he informed that it was early to call the cases asymptomatic before the completion of the detail clinical analysis that is being undertaken.
- Regarding PCR and RDT tests, he said that both the tests have their advantages and drawbacks and hence they should be wisely chosen as per requirement and guidelines.
- He also suggested to the provinces, not to have some direct religious references, asked them to deliver their activities as per guidelines provided from the MoHP and discouraged the use of sanitization tunnels.
- Regarding use of PPEs, he informed that a live update would be provided with WHO representatives' presence in rational use of PPE and requested the provinces for rational use since there is low stock of PPEs with MoHP.
- Dr. Karki suggested all the provinces to follow the guidelines endorsed by MoHP for different activities for COVID-19 management as well as non-COVID health services as well.
- He also reached out to different provinces (especially provinces sharing border with India) and different health partners to provide with medicines for Hemophilia as ministry is out of stock of those medicines and the procurement from outside was not be possible.
- Regarding queries on modification in lockdown he stated that a new modality (exit strategy) has been discussed and thought of and will be finalized on Sunday. He also notified provinces that they could also come up with ideas to address the issue and share them before Sunday.

The Chair thanked all the provinces, stakeholders and partners for their contribution in diagnosis, prevention and management of COVID-19. He also shared that MoHP has been trying hard to provide all the provinces with required logistics continuously but also suggested to search for locally available resources to address the logistic issues and notified that a flexible fund will be developed in order to help provinces in such cases. He also informed about the low stock of RNA extraction kit at MoHP and asked provinces for their efficient use. He also stressed that non-COVID health services should be provided regularly at the ground level by all the provinces. He also informed that many guidelines that will make activities against COVID-19 easier are to be endorsed in near future and asked provinces for rational use of PPE and come up with ideas to ease lockdown and share them. He also asked all the partners and provinces to come through one door system of support as all have been continually involved in the fight against COVID-19 with containment of COVID-19 as the common target.

Decisions/Action point:

- Health services (both COVID and non-COVID) to be continued at all levels
- Requests health sector partners to support with COVID-19 logistics especially N95 masks, reagent, VTM and swab sticks

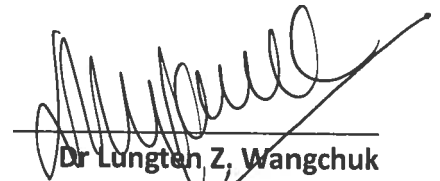


- Rational use of PPE and COVID logistics
- Utilization of local resources for management of COVID-19 (Plan for availability of flexible fund in such cases)
- One door mechanism to be followed in cases of support provided and received from partners
- Sharing of innovations and ideas to ease lockdown (exit strategy)

Signed by the Chair:



Dr Gunaraj Lohani
Chair/Lead



Dr Lungten Z. Wangchuk
Co-Chair/Co-Lead

1 May 2020