

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

A. Major Development Partners: Strategic Foci and Key Activities

1. A novel 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was recently detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, and has since continued to expand. On 30 January 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern". The outbreak spreads by person-to-person contact and the potential public health threat posed is high.

2. The Department of Health (DOH) is leading the country's outbreak response efforts and is currently being supported by the military, humanitarian development partners, and community service organizations. DOH reached out for support specifically to complement its limited supply of probe sets and testing kits, primers, and personal protective equipment (PPE). The Philippine government has adopted the WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19. In alignment with the plan, key activities are focused on sourcing urgently required laboratory supplies, strengthening national capacity for detection, equipping and training national rapid-response teams, infection prevention and control among health workers, and ensuring case management and continuity of essential health services.

3. The WHO drafted a costed response plan on behalf of the United Nations (UN), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), donors, and other partners to complement the government's efforts. Many partners assisted with risk communication, sharing of key messages, community engagement, hygiene promotion, provision of hand-washing and sanitary facilities in clinics and hospitals, training and supply of face masks, and tents for isolation and treatment of patients.

4. The WHO is supporting DOH with intensified surveillance to actively look for clusters of cases of COVID-19, aimed at improved coordination with Epidemiological Surveillance Units at municipal, city, and provincial and regional level. This entails continuous conduct event-based (or rumor-based) investigations, in close collaboration with local government units. The WHO is also supporting the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine with the assessment of an additional six private laboratories for COVID-19 testing. WHO is supporting DOH with preparing its four dedicated hospitals in the National Capital Region for treatment of severe and critical COVID-19 cases, to reduce the burden on other health facilities currently at risk of being overwhelmed.

5. On-the-job training on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and rational use of PPE were conducted in priority hospitals for frontline health workers and community health workers. Training is supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO. USAID-funded partners like the International Organization for Migration, Action Against Hunger, and Catholic Relief Services are stepping up their ongoing interventions in target areas in Mindanao for earthquake and conflict-affected populations. They are conducting training of rural health workers and volunteers on hygiene promotion and risk communication information dissemination, as well as construction of latrines, bathing cubicles, and handwashing areas. The Philippines Red Cross deployed its volunteers to conduct hygiene promotion activities for prevention of COVID-19 in schools and communities in close coordination with local health offices. With the current quarantine ongoing, partners are organizing online training on IPC and rational use of PPE.

6. Following the release of the guidelines for the Enhanced Community Quarantine on Metro Manila, DOH requested assistance from UNICEF Philippines to address the public in the critical first 72 hours post announcement. UNICEF Philippines supported DOH to hold its first-ever Facebook Live event to address the public and answer questions directly from the public and the media. UNICEF provided technical and production assistance on priority messages and format of the public statement.

7. USAID-funded Breakthrough-Action (Johns Hopkins University Centre for Communication Programs) are supporting DOH with risk communication activities for the general public and health workers. USAID is also assisted with the translation of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidance into Tagalog. The World Bank has earmarked a \$100 million fast-track loan to enable the DOH to procure PPE for health care workers, along with testing and laboratory materials and equipment, quarantine areas, isolation rooms, and other essential equipment.

8. ADB's \$3 million immediate financial assistance from the Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund helps meet immediate needs related to delivering appropriate medical services. ADB's support focus on: (i) strengthen DOH and related agencies' capacity to diagnose and confirm COVID-19 infection; (ii) enhance the health workers' protection through the provision of PPE; (iii) increase the treatment capacity for mild cases, including the building of makeshift hospitals; (iv) improve hospital equipment for the treatment of severe cases; and (v) strengthen capacity for public communication. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is proposing to cofinance (parallel) ADB's proposed COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Program.

Major Development Partners

Development Partner	Description of Support	Duration	Amount (\$ million)
Asian Development Bank	Support to DOH for COVID-19 control, including procurement of essential items such as laboratory supplies and equipment, ventilators, PPE, mobile hospitals.		3
Asian Development Bank	"Food by Friday" TA providing food baskets for 55,000 at risk families in Metro Manila		5
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Proposed parallel cofinancing for ADB CPRO		500
United Nations Children's Fund	Risk Communications and Community Engagement; critical supplies and logistics, including PPE and disinfection supplies; addressing primary impacts of the pandemic on health, nutrition and WASH; and secondary impacts on children and families.		1.1
United States Agency for International Development	Laboratory supplies, risk communication, IPC, surveillance, planning, training and community engagement.		2.7
World Bank	PPE, testing and laboratory material, quarantine areas, isolation rooms.		100
World Health Organization	Laboratory supplies, PPEs, mobilization of experts, training of trainers and planning workshops.		0.25

ADB = Asian Development Bank, CPRO = Countercyclical Support Facility Pandemic Response Option. COVID-19 = Coronavirus disease, DOH = Department of Health, IPC = Infection Prevention and Control, PPE= personal protective equipment.

Source: World Health Organization Philippines situation reports.

B. Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Development Coordination

9. ADB has been coordinating with the UN agencies and other development partners. Following WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, the Philippines has adopted a whole-of-society coordination mechanism. WHO leads the coordination mechanism

with the Incident Management Team and the Emergency Operating Center established by DOH. DOH, in close collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, has led the national contingency planning process involving all relevant government actors, private sector, and NGOs such as the Philippine Red Cross. WHO is complementing government efforts under the auspices of the Humanitarian Country Team. It established a planning mechanism aimed at coordinating contributions by UN agencies, NGOs, and donors to support implementation of the national contingency plan.

10. In addition to the Humanitarian Country Team initiatives, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office for the Philippines has activated a Crisis Management Team for COVID-19 and appointed two co-COVID-19 coordinators: the WHO Country Representative for the Philippines and the Head of the Philippines' UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

C. Achievements and Issues

11. Thanks to additional supplies received from WHO, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine was able to increase its daily testing capacity from 300 to 450 tests per day supported by four subnational laboratories (Cebu, Davao, Baguio, and Manila), soon to be followed by the University of the Philippines National Institute for Health. A global shortage of key supplies is resulting in serious delays with delivery of reagents, primers, probes, extraction kits, and transport media. WHO and ADB are supporting DOH with the sourcing of urgently required laboratory supplies. COVID-19-related restrictions are hindering many NGO partners in ongoing operations to provide support to displaced populations affected by recent disasters. WHO is advocating with DOH for supporting partners' exemption requests for increased access.

D. Summary and Recommendations

12. The government has been focused first in ensuring that funding is available for the efforts of the DOH to contain the spread of COVID-19 including strengthening national capacity for detection, equipping and training national rapid-response teams, and infection prevention and control among health workers. Second the government is to provide economic relief to those whose businesses and livelihoods have been affected by the spread of the disease.

13. Considering the substantial impact of COVID-19 and the government's constrained resources, it is recommended that more support is focused on mitigating the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable sectors of the population through social assistance programs, and a broader fiscal stimulus program to mitigate shocks to the economy.