

WHO, China leaders discuss next steps in battle against coronavirus outbreak (29 Jan-2020)

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, met President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China in Beijing. They shared the latest information on the novel coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) outbreak and reiterated their commitment to bring it under control.

Dr Tedros was joined by WHO Regional Director Dr Takeshi Kasai and Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme Dr Mike Ryan, and also met State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi and Minister of Health Ma Xiaowei.

The National Health Commission presented China's strong public health capacities and resources to respond and manage respiratory disease outbreaks. The discussions focused on continued collaboration on containment measures in Wuhan, public health measures in other cities and provinces, conducting further studies on the severity and transmissibility of the virus, continuing to share data, and for China to share biological material with WHO. These measures will advance scientific understanding of the virus and contribute to the development of medical countermeasures such as vaccines and treatments.

The two sides agreed that WHO will send international experts to visit China as soon as possible to work with Chinese counterparts on increasing understanding of the outbreak to guide global response efforts.

"Stopping the spread of this virus both in China and globally is WHO's highest priority," said Dr Tedros. "We appreciate the seriousness with which China is taking this outbreak, especially the commitment from top leadership, and the transparency they have demonstrated, including sharing data and genetic sequence of the virus. WHO is working closely with the government on measures to understand the virus and limit transmission. WHO will keep working side-by-side with China and all other countries to protect health and keep people safe."

The WHO mission comes as the number of people confirmed with the virus rose to over 4500 globally on 28 January, the greatest number being in China.

The WHO delegation highly appreciated the actions China has implemented in response to the outbreak, its speed in identifying the virus and openness to sharing information with WHO and other countries.

Much remains to be understood about 2019-nCoV. The source of the outbreak and the extent to which it has spread in China are not yet known. While the current understanding of the disease remains limited, most cases reported to date have been milder, with around 20% of those infected experiencing severe illness. Both WHO and China noted that the number of cases being reported, including those outside China, is deeply concerning. Better understanding of the transmissibility and severity of the virus is urgently required to guide other countries on appropriate response measures.

WHO is continually monitoring developments and the Director-General can reconvene the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee on very short notice as needed. Committee members are on stand-by and are informed regularly of developments.

For further information, please visit:

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

