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MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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21 January, 2020.

PRESS RELEASE

OUTBREAK OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INFECTION (2019-nCoV) IN CHINA

The Health Authorities in China confirmed an outbreak of a novel Coronavirus Infection on the 7th January 2020 in Wuhan Province in China following a series of reported cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in December 2019. The outbreak was linked to a local animal market (spread from animals to humans) but has also been found to spread from one person to the other. It can be spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes on another person.

The disease is characterized by fever, cough and difficulties in breathing. So far, four people have been confirmed dead due to the disease. Three other countries (Thailand, South Korea and Japan and United Arab Emirates) have also reported cases.

The World Health Organisation has called on countries to strengthen prevention and control measures for 2019-nCoV. Following the notification of the member states of the WHO on the outbreak, Ghana has initiated measures to protect the general public from the disease.

The following measures are currently being implemented:

1. Alert message sent to all regions in Ghana on the outbreak in addition to guidance information on the disease
2. Enhanced surveillance at points of entry especially the Kotoka International Airport

In addition, there is in-country capacity to diagnose 2019-nCoV through laboratory testing of the appropriate samples by the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research.

As part of measures to prevent an outbreak in Ghana, passengers from China will undergo enhanced screening procedures including the administration of health questionnaire. Health facilities have also been alerted to prepare and manage cases in case of an outbreak.

The general public is advised to adhere to the following measures as part of prevention;

- Regular washing of hands with soap and water
- Hand rubbing with alcohol is also advised where available
- Keep a distance of at least one step (one meter) from a person showing signs of fever, cough and difficulty in breathing
- If contact with a sick person or with potentially infected surfaces or objects occurs, those involved must not touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands;
- It is advisable to be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, eat well, reduce stress and have enough sleep
- People should seek treatment immediately if infection is suspected, if symptoms occur or when advised by a health worker

We hereby ask the general public and all stakeholders to support in efforts at preventing 2019-nCoV in Ghana.

For more information, kindly contact the following hotlines:

1. 0244417911
2. 0244643142
3. 0201210117

Thank you



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KWAKU AGYEMAN-MANU (MP)
MINISTER FOR HEALTH