

## Situation Overview

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and characterized as pandemic on 11 March 2020.

In Nepal, the first case was detected on 23 January 2020. This case had a link to Wuhan province of China where the outbreak of the virus started. A returnee Nepali student from Wuhan had tested positive for the virus in Nepal. Since then, the number has reached to 886 in total (27 May 2020), among them 4 people have lost their lives, 699 are under treatment and 183 have returned home after recovery. Likewise, a total of 55,282 people are in quarantine centers across seven provinces of Nepal.

The Government of Nepal has taken series of steps to control transmission and mitigate the impact of the outbreak and adopted strategies such as: enforcement of national wide lockdown, closure of international border and suspension of all international flight, testing of suspected cases, isolation, treatment, contact tracing and management of quarantine centers/sites.



## IOM Nepal Strategic Approach for COVID-19

IOM Nepal aims to contribute to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Preparedness and Response Plan to control further transmission and mitigate the impact of the outbreak. IOM believes that preparedness and response plans need to be responsive to population mobility and cross-border dynamics, and that inclusive approaches which take into account migrants, travelers, displaced populations, and local communities, and counter misinformation that can lead to anti-migrant sentiment and xenophobia are essential in the event of an outbreak.

Efforts are initially focused on preparedness and response, however, recovery is a major activity to address the socio-economic reintegration of the vulnerable groups. With this Preparedness and Response Plan IOM Nepal aims to contribute to the government of Nepal and national health partners preparedness and response efforts for COVID-19 to reduce associated morbidity and mortality and prepare for and address the crosscutting humanitarian needs of migrants impacted by COVID-19.

### COVID-19 and Situation of Nepal:

(MoHP 27 May 2020)

Total RT-PCR tested: 58,277

Total RDT tested: 100,287

Total positive cases identified: 886

### Quarantine and Isolation facility:

Total capacity: 102,758

Occupancy: 55,282

Total isolation beds: 3,423

Occupancy: 699

Total National ICU beds: 806

Occupancy: nil

No of ventilators : 343

Occupancy: nil

### Points of Entries:

With China

9 POEs

Status: closed

With India

19 POEs

Status: Closed

Total population: 28,982,772

## Proposed Response and activities implemented on COVID-19 till May 2020

IOM has proposed strategic actions to support a coordinated prevention, mitigation and response efforts of stakeholders from federal, provincial and cross border to control the transmission and mitigate the negative impact in the society and reduce a huge strain in the health care system, aligned with Health Sector Emergency Plan for COVID-19 pandemic and Joint UN Country Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 Pandemics in Nepal:

The proposed actions are divided in 7 pillars:

### Pillar 1: Coordination and partnership

- IOM Nepal is actively engaged to prepare the Country Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 led by the United Nation Resident Coordinator (RC) and has provided technical support in the cross cutting areas related to mobility and migration (health, protection, socio-economic recovery, Camp coordination and management (CCCM), shelter etc.).
- Provided technical support to Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to develop Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for COVID-19 pandemics from human mobility perspective.
- Providing continuous technical support and advice to MoHP on issues related to migration health during the health cluster coordination meeting;
- At sub-national level IOM in Province 1 is the UN Led agency to represent UN at provincial level, provide weekly update to RCO office and lead inter agencies meetings at provincial level.
- Providing continuous support to the RC's office to conduct assessment of quarantine sites/centres, and so far IOM has completed the assessment in 134 quarantine sites/ centres established by the Government of Nepal.

### Pillar 2: Risk Communication and Community Engagement

IOM in coordination with National Health Education Information and Communication Centre (NHEICC)/MoHP has been supporting to develop migrant-sensitive public health messaging. Following are the key achievements and initiatives:

- Developed one minute culturally and linguistically tailored animated video for facility based quarantine. The animated video is developed in six different languages: Nepali, Newari, Tamang, Maithali, Bhojpuri and Doteli languages; and has been broadcasted thrice a week through Image Channel Television.

The video can be accessed using the link: <https://youtu.be/AXmQmOVbu4k>

- Developing one minute animated video culturally and linguistically tailored animated video on stigma and discrimination reduction. For this, IOM has been engaging recovered case of COVID-19;
- Mobilizing radio network to broadcast radio-jingles in six different languages on COVID-19 related stigma, discrimination and xenophobia reduction.
- Mobilizing radio-network to develop and air migrants-focused radio programs. As of 27 May 2020, a total of two radio programs have been broadcasted. The program has been reached more than 60K population; engagement (like, share) - 3.5K; and comments: 200 plus. <http://www.facebook.com/134242996606448/videos/582316839146997/>
- Developing “One Stop COVID-19 Information Solution for Migrants” for migrant living abroad. Dedicated webpage is in the process of design and will be launched soon.
- Seven episodes of TV show “Talk of the Town”, have been broadcasted through a national Television focusing on COVID-19 preparedness and response.

### Pillar 3: Surveillance

IOM in coordination with MoHP and other relevant federal and provincial ministries and the local government has initiated the following interventions to strengthen the country's capacities:

- Conduct rapid phone survey in 753 municipalities (palika) in coordination with Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to understand the migration and migration health situation in Nepal;
- Conduct Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) in the three major provinces of Nepal in coordination with MoHP and local implementing partner to identify all POEs and priority locations that are most vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 and other health threats in result of trans-border flow of migrants, identify the health and operational resources by distributing and collecting data from participatory mapping questionnaire that contains 3 groups of indicators, with health being central in it. MoHP has also prioritized PMM as a priority intervention in its Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for COVID-19 Pandemic.



#### **Pillar 4: Point of Entry**

IOM in partnership with other UN agencies and local organizations will support the Government of Nepal to enhance the preparedness through:

- Make necessary arrangement to provide information to travellers including the display of posters and IEC materials on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, hand hygiene;
- Organize orientation training to officials and volunteers working at POEs for migrants sensitive screening, data collection and tracking based on recommendation of WHO/International Health Regulation/PMM;
- Support three POEs for improving hygiene infrastructure and equipment.

#### **Pillar 9: Protection**

- Conducted a survey with Private Recruitment Agencies in Nepal and with Nepal Association Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA) members to better understand the Covid-19 impacts on migrant workers in labour Destination countries and PRAs in Nepal. The survey has been undertaken with an objective to address and assist for better protection needs of vulnerable migrants and their families in source and destination countries and also to assist the private sectors during and after pandemic;
- Disseminated Recruiter's Guidance for protection of migrant workers during the Pandemic targeting individual Private Recruitment Agencies and Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies. The document can be accessed using below link: <https://iris.iom.int/covid-19-crisis-response>;
- IOM Nepal as the sub-group thematic lead on Migrants under Protection Cluster that includes Government, CSOs and UN, hosted the second thematic meeting on 15 May 2020 to provide an overview on COVID-19 impacts on migrants with particular concerns of protection issues, challenges of migrants in the destination countries and longer term reintegration planning on socio-economic recovery. The meeting gathered feedbacks from cluster members and paved way for-ward in responding the migrants protection concerns in coming days.

#### **Pillar 10: Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)**

- IOM, as the member of shelter cluster, is also an active member of the sub-group supporting the Government of Nepal in developing a checklist to ensure essential services and facilities while establishing a quarantine sites. The checklist could also be useful in upgrading the quarantine centers/ sites across 7 provinces.
- IOM as the provincial focal point for Province 1 supported UNRCO in conducting rapid assessment of more than 134 quarantine centres and sites established by the Government of Nepal in the Province.

#### **Pillar 11: Addressing Socio Economic Impacts**

- IOM Nepal is an active member of the Socio-Economic Recovery Cluster and has been working on the recovery needs of vulnerable migrants.
- IOM Nepal is closely coordinating with the government authorities on post-lockdown economic reintegration support to vulnerable migrants and their families.
- IOM will be conducting assessments in coordination with government authorities to map the skills of returning migrants, understand vulnerabilities and socio-economic needs of the migrants and communities to generate evidence based for reintegration programme and will support reintegration of the migrants.

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