



**SITREP: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness Update:
Directorate of Health Security & Emergencies (DHSE) Ministry of Health and
Sanitation**



Event Name:	COVID-19	Country:	Sierra Leone	Update:	SITREP # 03
Report Date:	26 th March 2020	Time:	As at 13:00HRS		
Prepared By:	Ministry of Health and Sanitation				

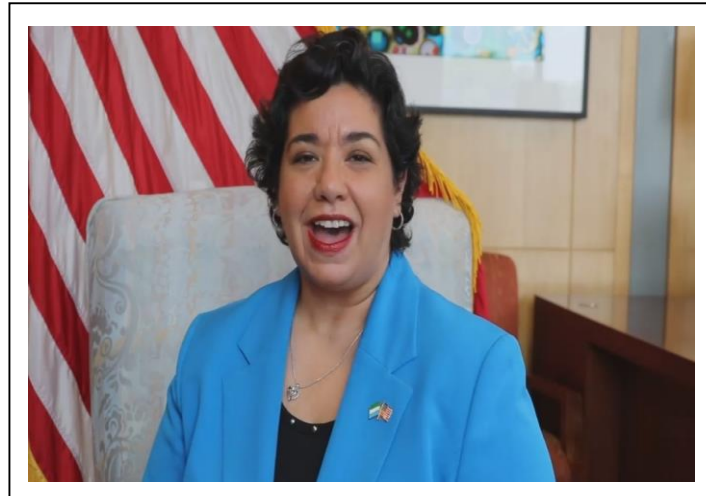
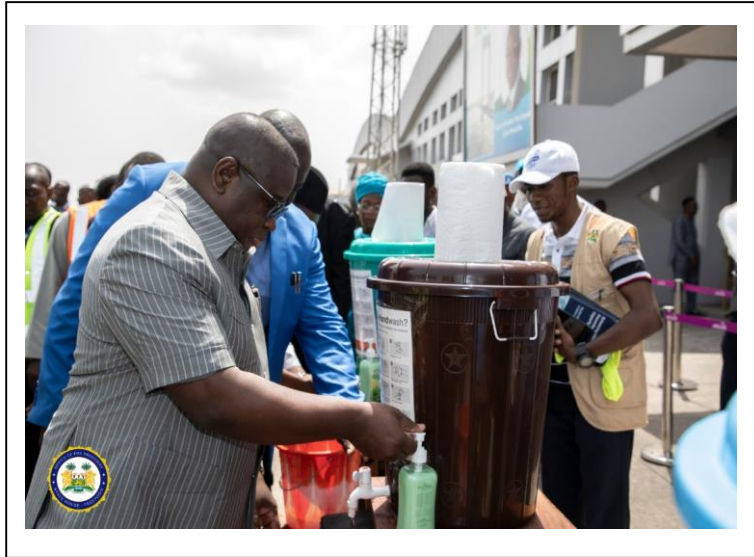
Total Nationwide Quarantined as at March 25: 335

Completed Quarantine as at March 25: 8

New Quarantine as at March 25: 8

HIGHLIGHTS

- **No confirmed case of COVID-19 in the country**
- Twenty seven (27) samples have been tested so far and all are negative
- **The President has declared a State of Public Emergency nationwide to heighten preparedness efforts of the country**
- **The US Ambassador encourages all to observe hand hygiene practices and social distances**
- The National Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHNEOC) stays at activation Level 2
- Security arsenals have been deployed at the land border crossing points to support efforts of mitigating illegal entry without screening.
- Social distancing measures have been intensified by banning all social and religious gatherings, especially those up to or





BACKGROUND AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

The virus has now been detected in all regions of the World. On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern. (PHEIC) which has now been declared a pandemic.

At the National Level, the National Public Health Emergency Management Committee (NPHEMC), under the leadership of the Chief Medical Officer, discussed the outbreak and subsequently directed activation of the Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre PHNEOC to activate to Level two (2) incidence response, with the Director of Health Security and Emergency being the de facto Incident Manager.

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness and Response Coordination

- The Minister of Health and Sanitation is providing an oversight role for coordinating preparedness
- Command Centres have been established at major border crossings to ensure coordination and effective management
- A presidential grand plan has been developed for preparedness and potential response and has been submitted to the President and key partners.
- Situation room activated at the EOC with different pillars
- District Emergency Operation Centres (DEOCs) activated
- Daily COVID-19 briefings held at the EOC chaired by a National Preparedness and Response coordinator
- Resources are being mobilized for nationwide preparedness interventions

Points of Entry Management

- Land and Maritime crossing points have been assessed and screening intensified
- All individuals screened at the Land border crossing points are being given a document to enable them ease of travelling through checkpoints. This is to discourage illegal crossings
- Stringent screening procedures are being implemented at major POEs.
- Weekly supportive supervision to designated staff for POE IHR core compliance ongoing

Surveillance and Laboratory

- Incoming passengers with travel history to countries with 50 cases or more within the last 14 days prior to their arrival are quarantined for up to 14 days
- Others from countries with lower cases are encouraged to self-quarantine for fourteen (14) days period
- Field Epidemiologists are deployed to all major border crossing points, with an intention to increase the number to other porous crossing points.
- Surveillance has intensified internal scanning by promptly responding to suspicious reports (whether rumours) and doing necessary assessments

IPC and Case Management

- Hand washing stations placed at strategic locations and institutions.



- Some supplies of IPC (soaps and buckets) have been procured by the government and partners and distributed to various POEs and other facilities
- Four clinicians returned from Severe COVID-19 Management trainings in Brazzaville, supported by WHO. About to roll out National level trainings.
- An eight (8) bed capacity identified for temporal holding facility at Jendema health facility (Sierra Leone Liberia border)
- A thirty (30) bed capacity identified for temporal holding facility at Zimmi in Pujehun

Communication and Social Mobilisation

- Engaged Political Parties Registration Commission to ensure the messaging to communities has an all-out political support
- Established strategies to swiftly respond to rumours and fake news
- Ongoing monitoring of media coverage to quickly handle misconception/misinformation particularly on social media
- Orientation of Civil Society Organizations and Inter-religious Council is successfully completed
- Printed and distributed IEC materials to various public places
- Engagement of community stakeholders across the country

Logistics

- Emergency supply chain management activated
- The Logistics Pillar has commenced assessment at various major health facilities for critical stocks
- A simulation exercise held with all logistic officers, including Pharmacists to bring them to speed with the use of the Emergency Logistic Playbook tool.
- Some Personal protective equipment (PPEs) for laboratory personnel and other essential staff has been procured for distribution when needed.

GENERAL GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- No functional case management facility for severe COVID-19 case in place
- Miss interpretation of State of Emergency instituted by the President
- Lack of Thermo scanner at Gbalamuya and Jendema POEs
- Limited human resource capacity (quarantine homes and investigations, PoE data entry)
- Sea ports of entry not currently effectively monitored
- Illegal entry points used by passengers still pose a big challenge
- Adherence to hand washing practices by majority of the general public not at maximum
- Inadequate resources to fully support critical preparedness and response activities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A need to strengthen and fast track resource mobilisation efforts for effective implementation of the Incident Action Plans
- Replacement of aged Infra-red Thermometer at all (POEs)
- Train the deployed state enforcement officers at unmanned border crossing points to track travellers entering the country
- Immediately procure and install a Thermo scanner at Gbalamuya and Jendema POEs
- Enhance sensitization campaign for community members to adhere to hand hygiene practices
- Streamline fuel procurement procedures for ease of sample transportation to the reference lab
- Enhance communication on public health implications of State of Emergency declared by the President

References:

1. Dr Alpha Wurie , Minister, Ministry of Health, +23276602089, minister@mohs.gov.sl
2. Dr Thomas T. Samba, Chief Medical Officer, +23276662162 cmo@mohs.gov.sl
3. Dr Mohamed A. Vandi, Director DHSE, +23276657703 dhse.director@mohs.gov.sl
4. Dr Jamres Squire:National Surveillance Manager -+23279838465 jmssquire@yahoo.com
5. Mr. Mukeh Kenneth Fahnbulleh, Public Health Emergency Manager, +23278009627 phe.manager@mohs.gov.sl
6. Dr Evans Liyosi , WHO-Country Representative-+23278878666, liyosic@who.int