



THE NATIONAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

NRI STAFF CIRCULAR

TO: ALL STAFF
FROM: THE DIRECTOR
DATE: MONDAY 23RD MARCH 2020
SUBJECT: NRI MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND GOVERNMENT DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

In response to the Government's directive through the Prime Minister's press conference on Sunday 22nd March 2020 about the measures needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic (Corona Virus), I am providing the following information and management directives.

Background Information on COVID-19

COVID-19 is a serious issue that is affecting the world not just in health terms but also economies and social life. In terms of global cases of the COVID-19, the update of statistics as of 21st March 2020 (source: www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ and WHO Situational report) is as follows:

- 337,300 confirmed cases/infections worldwide;
- 14,641 deaths;
- 98,627 recovered (closed);
- Active cases:
 - 224,032 currently infected patients,
 - 213, 479 cases classed as mild, and
 - 10,553 cases classed as serious or critical.
- 1 confirmed case in PNG (in Lae) through imported transmission.

PNG Highlights

- Total of 25,262 inbound passengers were screened at entry points at Jacksons International Airport including our seaports by 12/03/2020.
- 2,927 persons of interest have been identified by the health team and are monitored regularly by a surveillance team.
- 697 have completed the 14-day follow-up period.
- 2,230 still under active monitoring (majority from Port Moresby).

The Prime Minister in his Press Conference on March 22, 2020 has directed the following that are directly relevant to PNG NRI and its staff:

1. Declared State of Emergency for the next 14 days, starting as of the 24th of March 2020, where the Commissioner of Police (David Manning) will take charge.
2. Suspension of all domestic flights and restrictions on international flights.
3. All Public Transport of people from one province to another is suspended. Only approved cargo and medicine, and medical, police and military personnel.
4. All heads of departments and private companies to embrace safe work place practise and non-essential staff are asked to stay home for the next 14 days.

In addition to the above, staff should also read the rest of the measures announced by the Government in the newspaper and Press Release and follow the directives.

NRI Reponse

In response to Government directives and the State of Emergency Declared by the Prime Minister, and the seriousness of COVID-19, the NRI Senior Executive Management has formulated the following responses. This actions will remain in effect for the duration of the SOE from March 24, 2020 to 8 April, 2020 or unless advised otherwise by Management citing new Government directives:

1. General Operations:
 - a. All Research Staff and Senior Executive Management are allowed to work from home.
 - b. Non-Research staff are to stay away from work, except for the staff mentioned in (c) below to ensure smooth operations.
 - c. Critical Essential staff to remain in operation include (to be done on as and when required basis):
 - i. Finance – minimum staff to be maintained at the discretion of the Finance Manager.
 - ii. Human Resource - minimum staff to be maintained at the discretion of the HR Manager.
 - iii. Grounds & Facilities Manager - minimum staff to be maintained at the discretion of the GF Manager.
 - iv. ICT Officer to ensure Institute Phones and Internet services are maintained.

The above Leave of Absence is to be taken as paid leave of absence for staff to be away from work place to work at home from 24/03/20 to 08/04/20. The period is not to be taken as public holiday. This is a directive based on DPM Circular Instruction No.09/2020 issued today.

2. All large formal meetings within NRI including external meetings with stakeholders are suspended;
3. Small meetings by relevant staff may be held in the Thomas Webster Seminar Room with emphasis on social distancing of a minimum of 1.3m apart.
4. All staff to exercise personal hygiene and carry own hand sanitizers for personal use. Hand sanitizers will be made available at major locations of the Institute including the Seminar Room, CSD reception, Front Desk Reception (Annex), Researcher Desk (DDR's Assistant), and the Researcher Common Room upstairs.
5. Ensure to wash hands frequently with soap and water and use disposable handtowels to open and close office doors where necessary. Do carry your own hand towels and refrain from using the general issued handtowels in the Toilets and bathrooms.
6. Bottles of disinfectants and bleach will be made available in all our restrooms for use to keep the restrooms clean and safe.
7. Community clean up of the basketball grounds within the NRI Campus is to be suspended immediately until further notice.
8. Security Gate Control.
 - a) Only staff and immediate families are allowed on campus during this period.

- b) All extended family members, including visitors will not be allowed beyond the main gate.
 - c) Grounds & Facilities Manager to take charge of managing the gate control with the security.
 - d) ALL Contracted Security Companies shall continue to provide 24 hour service to NRI Campus including NRI properties around the city.
9. All General Maintenance to Campus Residents and NRI property will be suspended, except for emergencies such as plumbing and electrical issues. All maintenance queries are to be directed to the Grounds & Facilities Manager.
 10. Grounds & Facilities Manager will provide transport only for critical essential staff living off-campus to access the campus during this period.

The above measures will remain in force until April 8, 2020 or unless advised otherwise by management.

General Safety Recommendations:

Below is a non-exhaustive list of things to do to assist in avoiding the COVID-19 infection.

1. Ensure to maintain personal hygiene at all times.
2. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds or with a alcohol (>60%) base handsanitizer.
3. Practice Social distancing of no human contact closer than 1.3m of your personal space, and avoid handshakes and hugs.
4. Continue to disinfect your workspace (either at work or home) regularly, including your desk, office door handles, mobile phones, laptops, monitors, flash drives, and other portable items.
5. Dispose off any used tissue, cloth or rags into rubbish bins.
6. Refrain from purchasing communal food and recreational goods that are common usages;
7. Refrain from cultural practices of social drinking and chewing betelnut with your friends and neighbours or involving in large gatherings.
8. Wear a surgical face mask (sold at pharmacies) as a measure to guard against airborne infection.

Thank you.



Dr. Osborne Sanida
Director

Cc:

- Assoc. Prof. Eugene Ezebilo, Deputy Director Research
- Dr. Esther Lavu, A/Deputy Director, Corporate Services