

**Virtual Fifteenth Health Cluster Coordination Meeting  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
16 July 2020 -THURSDAY (2:00 – 3:00 pm)**

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Jageswor Gautam, Lead of the Health Cluster and co-chaired by Dr. Lungten Z. Wangchuk, Co-lead of the Health Cluster. More than 50 health partners participated the meeting virtually. Dr. Lungten Z. Wangchuk facilitated the meeting.

**Agenda for #15 Health Cluster Coordination Meeting, 16 July 2020**

Agenda Item	Responsible	Time
Welcome and Update	Dr. Jageswor Gautam, Chair-Health Cluster	14:00-14:05
<b>Summary recommendations</b> from 'Sixth National Summit of Health and Population Scientists in Nepal Addressing Emerging Public Health Issues through Interdisciplinary Research' July 06-07, 2020'	Dr. Pradip Gyanwali, Executive Chief, NHRC	14:05-14:10
Follow-up action points and brief updates from partners	Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-chair, WHO	14:10-14:15
COVID-19 response support from Save The Children	Ms. Sangita Khatri, Health Advisor	14:15-14:20
Summary of the meeting followed by discussions/questions	Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-chair, WHO Advisors MoHP and Chair ( answers/ comments to the questions)	14:20-14:25
Discussions/Questions	All	14:25-14:35
Comments/Answers to the questions	Advisors/Chair	14:35-14:40
Conclusion and closing	Dr. Jageswor Gautam, Chair-Health Cluster	14:40-14:55

**Synopsis of the meeting**

Dr. Gautam welcomed all the participants to the meeting and provided brief updates on the responses of MoHP to manage the COVID-19. The details of tests and isolation/quarantine of COVID-19 cases as of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were also provided. He shared that the orientation and training on Contact investigation and Contact Tracing (CICT) provided by EDCD to health care service providers of Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces. He also listed the laboratories which are approved to provide paid PCR test services. The different public and private laboratories approved for the services are as follows:

<b>As of 15 July 2020</b>
Total PCR sites: <b>27</b>
Total PCR tests done: <b>298,829</b> (an addition of 32,272 in past week)
Total PCR positive: <b>17,177</b> (an addition of 754 in past week)
Total active cases: <b>6,113</b> (in isolation)
Total discharged: <b>11,025</b> (3,273 in past week)
Affected districts: <b>77</b>
Deaths: <b>39</b> (4 additional deaths)
Total isolation beds: <b>8,826</b>
Total quarantine beds: <b>215,583</b>
Total people in quarantine: <b>24,527</b>



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**Public Laboratories:**

Province 1: Koshi Hospital  
Province 2: Narayani Hospital  
Bagmati Province: Bir Hospital, Patan Hospital and TUTH  
Gandaki Province: Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences  
Province 5: Lumbini Provincial Hospital  
Karnali Province: Provincial Public Health Laboratory, Surkhet  
Sudurpaschim Province: Provincial Public Health Laboratory, Dhangadi

**Private Laboratories:**

1. Star Hospital, Sanepa, Lalitpur
2. KMC, Duwakot
3. CDL (Central Diagnostic Laboratory), Kamalpokhari
4. Sooriya Health care, Lazimpat
5. National Path Lab, Butwal
6. Bageswari Diagnostic, Kohalpur, Nepalgunj

Dr. Gautam also stressed upon the importance of monsoon preparedness and response plan along with COVID-19 response and requested the health partners on the following:

- Prepare monsoon preparedness and response readiness plan
- Alert your field offices for necessary support in close coordination with Provincial/District health offices
- Communicate health related response needs to the nearest Provincial Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC)
- Add mosquito nets and PPEs in stock for response
- Disseminate COVID-19 Public health standards, 2077 to field offices and/or response teams
- Follow one door mechanism for response support

Dr. Pradip Gyanwali, Executive Chief (Member Secretary), Nepal Health Research Council then provided with the summary recommendations from 'Sixth National Summit of Health and Population Scientists in Nepal 'Addressing Emerging Public Health Issues through Interdisciplinary Research' July 06-07, 2020'. Dr. Gyanwali informed that the sixth national summit included many inter-disciplinary researches and recommendations on topics like Research and Development in COVID-19 context; COVID-19 Research in Nepal; Neglected Tropical Diseases; Interdisciplinary and Implementation Research; Health Governance, Economics and Financing; Digital Health, Environment Health and Bio-Medical Research; Mental Health, Disabilities and Emergency; Non-communicable Diseases; and Nutrition, Maternal and Child Health. The major recommendations from the summit were:

- Emphasize research on infectious disease control and prevention along with NCDs, Environmental Health, Mental Health, Health Governance, etc.
- Promote interdisciplinary and implementation research in collaboration and partnership
- Enhance and promote research culture in local context
- Expand NHRC structure in provinces
- Foster digital platform for research related events and activities
- Develop central data base system and data sharing guidelines for health research

Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-chair informed about the increase in discharges and many districts being free of active cases. She also informed that tests were increasing owing to addition of PCR testing laboratories. She then informed about the supports from different partners on COVID-19 response in different areas. The health partners are providing support in the following areas:

- Surveillance, Rapid Response Team and Case Investigation
- Laboratories and Testing
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Points of Entry
- Risk Communication and Community Engagement
- Coordination, Planning and Monitoring
- Secondary Social/Health System Impacts- Continuity of Services

Following the health partners update, she also provided with the update from mental health sub-cluster. She informed that the MHPSS services were available in 50 districts and in all provinces with risk communication/community awareness, provision of mental health and psychosocial support, provision of clinical mental health services, training of service providers on Psychological First Aid, webinar on Suicide Prevention to health care service providers and health/social/legal referral being the major activities conducted. She also informed that different recommendations like stigma reduction, strengthening primary and secondary care facilities to provide mental health services and fulfilling the mental health needs of COVID-19 recovered have been provided by the MH subcluster. She also informed that the MH sub cluster needs support in funding and systematic actions at the provincial response plan for effectiveness of COVID 19 MHPSS Intervention Framework.

Ms. Sangita Khatri, Health Advisor, Save The Children then shared what Save the Children is doing on COVID-19 management in Nepal. She provided brief introduction of the organization with the country strategic goals and thematic areas including health and nutrition where they are providing support. She stated that the organization is working in selected districts of Province 2, Bagmati Province and Karnali Province forming partnership with government; national/local/international non-governmental organizations; academia, hospitals and research organizations; and others (alliances, civil society organizations, associations, non-profit organizations). She then updated on the support provided by the organization in COVID-19 response that primarily included coordination with provincial clusters, support to quarantine centers with supplies and WASH, logistical support to municipalities, distribution of health commodities, and risk communication and community engagement. In addition, she informed about the supports provided by Global Fund (under Save the Children, Nepal) like PPE and IPC items, medical equipment, laboratory equipment, and food and nutrition support for COVID-19 response. She also informed that the organization has planned for additional support in laboratory equipment, medical equipment and PPE.

Dr. Lungten thanked Ms. Khatri for her presentation and aligning the future support as per the need of MoHP. She also requested all the partners to align the support with the key asks from MoHP. She also thanked NHRC for conducting the national summit as well as its inclusion in different global and local researches on COVID-19. She, on behalf of the health cluster lead, requested all the partners to provide support for monsoon preparedness and response as well with inclusion of PPEs. She then opened the floor for questions from the participants to which the lead and co-lead of the health cluster responded.

On the ask whether APF could be included in the cluster meeting, the chair responded that they can and suggested that they be included from the next meeting. On the query regarding the capacity of Police Laboratory being the latest, the co-lead informed that the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) is the reference laboratory and police laboratory is the

newest added on the list to test for COVID-19 do not supersede NPHL in terms of capacity and role. On the query regarding specification of automatic RNA extraction machine, the co-lead informed that Health Emergency Operation Center will obtain the specifications from logistics department and NPHL and will share it with partners interested in supporting laboratory machine or other laboratory logistics. On query regarding possibility of sharing the health cluster meeting minutes with provinces, the chair suggested the meeting minutes be shared with provinces. Regarding the query on any guideline developed for Reproductive Health and Mental Health Sub-clusters, the co-lead informed that an interim guideline is being developed by Mental Health sub-cluster and the RH Sub cluster developed the Interim Guidance for RMNCH services in COVID 19 Pandemic. On the query of Dr. Hashina Begum from UNFPA regarding inclusion of RH minimum standards in quarantine guidelines, the co-lead informed that Dr. Samir Kumar Adhikari, Chief, HEOC will check the guideline and update about it through mail. On request of Dr. Hashina to get informed about the logistics gap in the field level, the co-lead informed that the presentation from the Management Division updates about the stocks, needs and gaps of the logistics for COVID-19 every alternate week.

Before ending the meeting, the chair, Dr Gautam thanked all the participants of the meeting for their presence and kind support in COVID-19 response. He also thanked Dr. Pradip Gyanwali and Ms. Sangita Khatri for their presentations and urged everyone to work together for achieving a common goal in COVID-19 response.

#### Decision/Action points

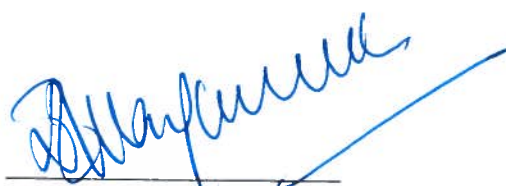
- Requested the partners to support on monsoon preparedness and response
- Provide support on COVID-19 aligning to the key asks from MoHP using one door mechanism
- Reach to MoHP or HEOC for specifications about compatible laboratory machines and items (reagents)

Signed by the Chair:



**Dr Jageswor Gautam**  
Chair/Lead

22 July 2020



**Dr Lungten Z. Wangchuk**  
Co-Chair/Co-Lead