US$675 million needed for new coronavirus preparedness and response global plan *Urgent support needed to protect vulnerable countries from outbreak*

5 February 2020 ¦ Geneva: To fight further spread of the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in China and globally, and protect states with weaker health systems, the international community has launched a US$675 million preparedness and response plan covering the months of February through to April 2020.

“My biggest worry is that there are countries today who do not have the systems in place to detect people who have contracted with the virus, even if it were to emerge,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “Urgent support is needed to bolster weak health systems to detect, diagnose and care for people with the virus, to prevent further human to human transmission and protect health workers.”

The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) for the new coronavirus lays out activities and resources needed by international health organizations globally, including WHO,ÂÂ to implement priority public health measures in support of countries to prepare and respond to nCoV-2019 for a period February-April 2020. The objectives of the plan are toÂÂ ÂÂ limit human-to-human transmission of the virus, particularly in countries most vulnerable if they were to faceÂÂ anÂÂ outbreak; identify, isolate and care for patients early; communicate critical risk and event information; minimize social and economic impact; reduce virus spread from animal sources; and address crucial unknowns.

The plan focuses on:

- Rapidly establishing international coordination and operational support;
- Scaling up country readiness and response operations;
- Accelerating priority research and innovation.

“The effectiveness of outbreak response depends on the preparedness measures put in place before outbreaks strike,” said Dr Mike Ryan, head of WHO’s Health Emergencies Programme. “That is why we are seeking resources to safeguard the most vulnerable countries to protect people from the new coronavirus before it arrives on the doorstep.”

As noted in the SPRP, WHO assesses that the outbreak poses a very high risk in China, and high risk regionally and globally. The risk assessment was based on factors including the likelihood of further spread, the potential impact on human health, and the varying levels of effectiveness in national preparedness and response measures. Accelerated action, as called for in the plan, can address these risks and areas requiring support.

As of 10 a.m. Central European Time on 5 February, 25 countries have reported confirmed cases of the new coronavirus, including China, where 24,363 people had contracted the virus, or over 99% of all cases. In all other countries, 191 cases have contracted the virus.