

Dear Colleagues

03 February 2020

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

International and local media the past few weeks has been abound with news of the coronavirus epidemic, which started in China and which was this week declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Minerals Council has put together this information and attachments, for both employees and healthcare workers.

FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has valuable information on its website including a specimen submission form and a case investigation form that are required for investigating and reporting cases. These are available at:

<http://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/novel-coronavirus-infection/>

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF THE CORONAVIRUS SO FAR?

The virus originated in China's Wuhan city - Hubei province, and is now gradually spreading – through human-to-human contact and international air travel – around the world. There have been no reported cases of coronavirus in South Africa to date. It is, however, likely to continue to spread, given the communicable nature of the disease. WHO advises implementing measures to limit the risk of exporting or importing the disease.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO PREVENT CORONAVIRUS?

There is no vaccine available at present. That means there is not yet any medical way to prevent people becoming infected. Both the WHO and the NICD are clear that careful personal hygiene is the best way to prevent the spread of the illness.

The WHO guidelines are:

- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices

There is more information from the WHO [HERE](#) – please familiarise yourself with it to avoid spreading false information that could unnecessarily alarm or even harm people.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL SICK

The NICD has issued guidance to all government and private health facilities and GPs in South Africa. They know what to look out for if you report to them with symptoms.

The WHO says that if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care as soon as possible and share your previous travel history with your health care provider.

The Minerals Council continues to monitor the situation and we will keep you informed should the situation or the guidance change.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

Dr Thuthula Balfour

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