ETHIOPIA CONFIRMED THE FIRST CASE OF COVID-19

Ethiopian Public Health Institute has confirmed positive test in Ethiopia for COVID-19. The person found positive is a 48 year old Japanese citizen who came to Ethiopia on March four, 2020 from Burkina Faso. Ethiopia has put in place a disease surveillance program since the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, and it has now identified the first positive case in the country. The patient is currently isolated at our facility. He is undergoing medical follow up and is in a stable condition. Those who have been in contact with this person are being traced and quarantined.

Since fear and panic are as dangerous as the disease itself, this first positive case in the country should not let us lower our guard but should propel us to redouble our effort to control the disease. Most people infected with the virus do get well soon with very little pain, but elderly people with underlying illness may develop serious health problems because of the new infection.

Ever since the outbreak of the disease in China, The Ethiopian Government and Federal Ministry of Health have been working a lot to ramp up our preparedness to detect and contain, as well as mitigate its impact if transmission occurs. The National COVID-19 Ministerial committee established by H.E the Prime Minister, is leading this work across the country. A Multi-sectoral technical Task Force from various offices and the Public Health Emergency Operating Center of Ethiopian Public Health Institute is coordinating these efforts and the day to day work. The Government has allocated additional budget for

the prevention effort and mobilizing more resources. Quarantine and isolation centers are also established and Eko Kotebe hospital is prepared and equipped with trained medical staff and has opened its doors to receive and care for COVID-19 patients in the country while we are also working to hire more professionals to support this response.

By confirming the fact that the Ethiopian Government is doing everything to contain the spread of the disease and reduce its impact, we at Ministry of Health and Ethiopian Public Health Institute urge our people not to panic but stay calm and do everything it can to stop the spread of the disease in our country.

A press conference with detailed information on the status of the disease in our country will held shortly. In case of a need for further information, please feel free to call 8335 round the clock.

Lia Tadesse, MD, MHA

Minister of Health