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In reply please  
refer to:

Your reference:

His Excellency  
Mr Joko Widodo  
President of the Republic of Indonesia  
Istana Merdeka  
Jakarta-Pusat  
Indonésie

10 March 2020

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to write to you to express my appreciation for the efforts taken by the Government of Indonesia in addressing the COVID-19 situation in Indonesia.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is tirelessly working with Member States and networks of experts to analyze and disseminate vital knowledge on COVID-19 response. In order to defeat this virus, every country needs to take robust measures designed to slow transmission and contain its spread. Unfortunately, we have seen undetected or under detected cases at the early stages of the outbreak result in significant increases in cases and deaths in some countries. To this end, WHO continues to urge countries to focus on case detection and laboratory testing capacity, particularly in countries with large populations and varying health systems capacities across the nation.

Early confirmation of cases is a critical factor to understand the transmission of COVID-19 and to be able to contain the outbreak to first few cases and clusters. In areas where there is ongoing local transmission undetected or under-detected, WHO strongly recommends the following urgent actions to reduce transmission and prevent further spread:

- scale up emergency response mechanisms including declaration of national emergency;
- educate and actively communicate with the public through appropriate risk communication and community engagement;
- intensify case finding, contact tracing, monitoring, quarantine of contacts, and isolation of cases;
- expand COVID-19 surveillance using existing respiratory disease surveillance systems and hospital-based surveillance;
- test suspect cases per WHO case definition, contacts of confirmed cases; test patients identified through respiratory disease surveillance;

cc: The Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, Ministry of Health, Jakarta  
The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta Pusat  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva

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- establish sufficient and decentralized laboratory capacity which will allow teams to identify clusters of transmission so that urgent action can be taken - this includes testing not only cases with a known direct link to a positive case, but all patients suffering from influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory disease; and
- intensify the promotion of public health measures, including hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and practicing social distancing.

I would be greatly appreciative of your full support to implement the above public health measures, as they represent a critical package of interventions needed to address this situation as rapidly as possible.

I would also be grateful if the Republic of Indonesia could provide WHO with detailed information about the approach to surveillance and testing, contact identification and contact tracing for COVID-19 and any data or summaries. It is important that WHO receives such critical data to facilitate a more comprehensive risk assessment globally, and to effectively collaborate and coordinate with ministries of health and relevant national authorities of all affected countries.

Through our Regional Office for South East-Asia and the Country Office in Indonesia, WHO stands ready to support the efforts of the Government of Indonesia and the relevant ministries. I understand that our Regional Director has already written to the Minister of Health and the Country Office is closely working with relevant authorities and partners.

I am counting on your personal leadership and political will, which not only reflects strong partnership with WHO, but also demonstrates the Republic of Indonesia's commitment to global health security.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director-General