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China shares genetic sequence of novel coronavirus from Wuhan: WHO

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GENEVA, Jan. 12 (Xinhua) -- The World Health Organization (WHO) said Sunday that China had shared the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus in the latest outbreak in the central city of Wuhan, which is of great importance for developing specific diagnostic kits.

The WHO said Sunday that it had received further detailed information from China's National Health Commission, which suggested that the outbreak was associated with exposures in a seafood market in Wuhan, a major domestic and international transport hub.

Sharing the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus is of great importance for other countries' development of specific diagnostic kits, the WHO said, adding that the quality of ongoing investigations and the response measures implemented in Wuhan are reassuring.

It has also confirmed that respiratory pathogens such as influenza, avian influenza, adenovirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) were ruled out as the cause.

While investigations are still under way to assess the full extent of the outbreak, the WHO does not recommend any specific health measures for travelers, and advises against any travel or trade restrictions on China based on the information currently available on this event.

The cluster of the novel coronavirus was initially reported on Dec. 31 last year. Since then, most cases have been found to be working at or handlers of and frequent visitors to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which has been temporarily closed to carry out environmental sanitation and disinfection.

Local authorities have so far confirmed 41 cases with novel coronavirus infection preliminarily diagnosed in Wuhan, of whom seven are severely ill. The only death case was a patient with other underlying health conditions.

The clinical signs and symptoms reported are mainly fever, with a few cases having difficulty in breathing, and chest radiographs showing invasive pneumonic infiltrates in both lungs.

Currently, no case with infection of this novel coronavirus has been reported elsewhere other than Wuhan, and the Chinese government reported that there is no clear evidence that the virus passes easily from person to person.

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