

The Independent Investigation Commission on the Japanese Government's Response to COVID-19: Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned

## Chronology of major events in connection with COVID-19

Dec.31, 2019	The sanitation and health committee of Wuhan, China announces the outbreak of a viral pneumonia of unknown cause in the city.
Jan.5-6, 2020	The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry reports on the outbreak of pneumonia of unknown cause in China on the quarantine station website FORTH (on Jan. 5) and issues a press release (on Jan. 6).
Jan.15	The first COVID-19 case in Japan is confirmed.
Jan.21	The first meeting of Cabinet ministers on COVID-19 control is held.
	The Foreign Ministry issues its Travel Advisory and Warning on Infectious Diseases Level 1 (exercise caution) for all of China on Jan. 21, and raises the advisory on Wuhan to Level 2 (avoid non-essential travel) on Jan. 23.
Jan.22-23	The World Health Organization convenes an emergency meeting to discuss its response but decides not to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).
Jan.23	Lockdown is enforced in Wuhan.
Jan.26	Prime Minister Abe announces a plan to help Japanese in Wuhan return home.
	Foreign Minister Motegi holds a teleconference with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi over the response to COVID-19.
Jan.28	An ordinance is promulgated to classify the novel coronavirus as a designated infectious disease under the Infectious Diseases Control Law (originally to take effect on Feb. 7).
	The health ministry sets up its headquarters on response to COVID-19 led by the health minister.
Jan.29	The first of five chartered flights (held until Feb. 17) to repatriate Japanese from Wuhan arrives in Japan.
Jan.30	The WHO declares a PHEIC for COVID-19. The government holds the first meeting of its novel coronavirus response headquarters.
Jan.31	The government, in response to the WHO's PHEIC declaration, moves up the implementation of the ordinance to designate COVID-19 as a designated infectious disease from Feb. 7 to Feb. 1.
Feb.1	With the classification of COVID-19 as a designated infectious disease, the government takes steps under the immigration control law to ban the entry of foreigners who had been in China's Hubei Province over the past 14 days and those holding Chinese passports issued by Hubei Province.
Feb.3	Quarantine of the cruise ship Diamond Princess anchored off the Daikoku pier of Yokohama starts.
Feb.4	The health ministry holds the first meeting of an advisory board of experts under its COVID-19 headquarters.
	Passengers and crew of the Diamond Princess confirmed to have been infected with COVID-19.
Feb.13	The first COVID-19 death in Japan is reported.
	The government's headquarters decides on emergency measures for responding to the novel coronavirus disease.
	With the entry ban expanded to include the Zhejiang Province, a new ordinance is promulgated (to take effect the following day) to change

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	measures on COVID-19 as a designated infectious disease (to cover asymptomatic carriers of the virus) and designate it as an infectious disease under Article 34 of the Quarantine Act (to enable isolating and restricting the activities of infected people).
Feb.14	The Expert Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control is launched (and its first meeting is held on Feb. 16).
Feb.15	The foreign ministers of Japan, the United States and South Korea meet in Munich, Germany and agree that they support the measures taken by China to prevent COVID-19 infections from spreading and that the international community should lend its support.
Feb.17	Health minister Kato calls on people who have cold-like symptoms or a fever 37.5 degrees or higher for four days or longer to contact the consultation centers for “returnees and contact persons.”
Feb.24	The expert panel announces its view on formulating the basic policy on COVID-19 response, saying Japan was at a “critical juncture” in the next week or two of either seeing a rapid spread in the infection or putting the disease under control.
Feb.25	The government’s headquarters adopts the basic policy for its COVID-19 response.
	A team for countermeasures on infection clusters is set up at the health ministry’s headquarters.
	The Foreign Ministry issues a travel advice and warning for Daegu metropolitan city and Cheongdo county, Gyeongsangbuk-do in South Korea.
Feb.26	The government requests that national-level sports and cultural events over the next two weeks be canceled, postponed or scaled down.
Feb.27	The government requests that elementary, junior high and high schools across the country be temporarily closed beginning March 2.
Feb.28	The Hokkaido governor declares a state of emergency for the prefecture, requesting that residents stay home over the weekend.
Feb.29	Prime Minister Abe holds his first news conference on COVID-19, explaining the request for school closures and other measures.
March 5	The postponement of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s state visit is announced.
March 6	The Cabinet approves a plan to tighten quarantine measures (requesting a 14-day waiting period for travelers from China and South Korea, restrictions on visas, etc.), to take effect on March 9.
March 9	Travel Advisory and Warning on Infectious Diseases Level 2 (Avoid non-essential travel) is issued for all of Italy, while the advisory and alert is raised to Level 3 (Avoid all travel) for the three provinces of northern Italy.
	The government’s expert panel calls on people to avoid the “Three Cs” to prevent COVID-19 infections.
	A team for securing masks and medical supplies is set up at the health ministry’s headquarters.
March 10	The government’s headquarters adopts the second set of emergency measures on COVID-19.

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	The Cabinet approves an amendment to the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response.
	The novel coronavirus is designated as a “historic emergency” under the guideline on the management of public documents.
March 11	The WHO declares the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.
March 13	The revision to the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases is enacted and takes effect the following day.
March 17	The expert panel calls on the government to tighten border control measures vis-a-vis Europe.
March 19	Hokkaido lifts the state of emergency for the prefecture.
March 21	Quarantine measures are tightened and visa restrictions are launched vis-a-vis 38 countries including most of Europe, Iran and Egypt.
March 22	The International Olympic Committee says it will make a concrete decision on the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, including a possible postponement of the games, within four weeks.
March 23	The Office for the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control is established in the Cabinet Secretariat.
	Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike says the government may introduce powerful measures such as a lockdown depending on the situation of COVID-19 infections.
March 24	Prime Minister Abe holds a teleconference with ICO President Thomas Bach, and the IOC agrees to postpone the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games for about a year.
March 25	Tokyo Governor Koike says the capital is on the brink of an “overshoot” (an explosive increase in infections) and requests people to stay home at night and over the weekend.
March 26	The Cabinet adopts and promulgates (to take effect the following day) an ordinance partially revising an earlier ordinance specifying COVID-19 as a designated infectious disease.
	Health minister Kato reports to Prime Minister Abe that the novel coronavirus is strongly feared to have spread across the country.
	The government sets up its COVID-19 response headquarters under the revised special measures act.
	Prime Minister Abe attends a videoconference of Group of 20 leaders.
March 27	The first meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Basic Action Policy under the Advisory Council on Countermeasures Against Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases is held.
March 28	The government’s COVID-19 headquarters adopts its basic action policy on response to the novel coronavirus disease.
March 29	Popular comedian Ken Shimura dies of pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus.
April 1	A total of 49 countries in Asia, Oceania, North America and Europe are added to the list of countries subject to Japan’s entry ban and stiffer quarantine measures.
April 3	Professor Hiroshi Nishiura of the Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine releases data highlighting the need for people to reduce contacts with others by 80 percent.

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	Measures commence refusing landing by people from 49 countries and regions (including the U.S., Britain, Australia, China, South Korea, Taiwan, most of Europe, Southeast Asia, parts of the Middle East and Africa as well as Central and South America), and tighter quarantine and restrict visas vis-a-vis all other countries.
April 7	The government declares a state of emergency for Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka prefectures through May 6 (with the cumulative number of people testing positive for novel coronavirus reaching 3,906 as of 6 p.m. on April 6). The basic action policy on COVID-19 response is revised. The Cabinet adopts an emergency package of economic measures in response to COVID-19.
April 16	The state of emergency is expanded to all of the nation's 47 prefectures, with a special alert issued for Tokyo and 12 other prefectures.
April 24	Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator is set up under the WHO.
April 30	The first supplementary budget for fiscal 2020 is approved by the Diet.
May 4	The state of emergency is extended through May 31. Prime Minister Abe tells a news conference that the PCR test system is "clogged" and indicates the government aims to win approval for Avigan as a medicine for COVID-19 by the end of the month.
	Speaking at the EU-led Coronavirus Global Response (pledging conference), Abe says development of and equitable access to vaccines and support for developing countries are a priority and pledges \$234 million in additional contribution to Gavi Vaccine Alliance and CEPI (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations).
May 7	The health ministry grants special approval for emergency use of Remdesivir for COVID-19 treatment.
May 11	A U.S.-led meeting of foreign ministers from interested countries on COVID-19 is held.
May 14	The government lifts the state of emergency in 39 prefectures. The expert panel announces the criteria for lifting and re-introducing the state of emergency.
May 18-19	The 73rd World Health Assembly is held.
May 21	The state of emergency is lifted in three prefectures in the Kansai region, leaving four prefectures in the Greater Tokyo area and Hokkaido still under a state of emergency.
May 25	The state of emergency is lifted across the country. Prime Minister Abe attributes the results to "the power of the Japan model." Border control measures continue with 11 countries and regions added to the list subject to Japan's entry ban.
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May 29	The expert panel releases its first "situation analysis and recommendations" after the lifting of the state of emergency, and cites the broad access to medical services under the universal public health insurance system, the high degree of citizens' hygiene awareness and changes in people's behavior, as well as the infection cluster countermeasures, as the key reasons enabling Japan to keep its COVID-19 infections and deaths lower than Western countries.

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June 12	The second supplementary budget for fiscal 2020 clears the Diet.
June 17	The regular Diet session (the 201th session) closes.
June 18	Prime Minister Abe holds a news conference wrapping up the regular Diet session. Abe tells the government's COVID-19 headquarters that the government will start talks with Vietnam, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand to explore a scheme to resume mutual travel while maintaining the current border control measures.
June 24	COVID-19 response minister Nishimura announces the "abolition" of the expert panel.
	Wakita Takaji and other members of the panel hold a news conference and say the panel became "forward-leaning" in its posture.
July 6	The government's Novel Coronavirus Disease Control Subcommittee holds its first meeting.
July 17	The basic policy on economic and fiscal policy management and reforms for 2020 is approved by the Cabinet.