

# Media Update

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## United Nations

PRESS RELEASE

### COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan

#### UN issues \$10.3 billion coronavirus appeal and warns of the price of inaction

The UN's Humanitarian Chief, Mark Lowcock, has called on G20 nations to act now or face a series of human tragedies more brutal and destructive than the direct health impacts of the virus as he released an updated US\$10.3 billion appeal to fight the coronavirus in low-income and fragile countries.

Without mitigating action, the pandemic and associated global recession are set to trigger the first increase in global poverty since 1990 and push 265 million people to the point of starvation by the end of the year. Recent estimates suggest up to 6,000 children could die every day from preventable causes as a result of direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19. Meanwhile, diverted health resources could mean the annual death toll from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria doubling.

COVID-19 is now present across the globe, with more than 13 million confirmed cases and more than 580,000 deaths worldwide. Last week the first confirmed case was reported in Idlib, Syria, sparking fears of a devastating outbreak in crowded camps holding displaced people. In Yemen people's immune systems are struggling to fight back after years of war and deprivation and about a quarter of Yemenis confirmed to have COVID-19 have died – five times the rate globally.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock said:

“The pandemic and associated global recession are about to wreak havoc in fragile and low-income countries. The response of wealthy nations so far has been grossly inadequate and dangerously short-sighted. Failure to act now will leave the virus free to circle round the globe, undo decades of development and create a generation's worth of tragic and exportable problems.

“It doesn't have to be like this – this is a problem that can be fixed with money from wealthy nations and fresh thinking from the shareholders of international financial

institutions and supporters of UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and NGOs.

“Rich countries have thrown out the rulebook when it comes to protecting their own economies. They must apply the same exceptional measures to countries that need help. The prospect of cascading crises more brutal and destructive than anything the virus alone can do must jolt us all out of our comfort zone.”

The COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan is the international community’s primary fundraising vehicle to respond to the humanitarian impacts of the virus in low- and middle-income countries and support their efforts to fight it. It brings together appeals from WHO and other UN humanitarian agencies. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and NGO consortiums have been instrumental in helping shape the plan and deliver it, and they can access funding through it. The plan provides help and protection that prioritize the most vulnerable. This includes older people, people with disabilities, displaced people, and women and girls, given pandemics heighten existing levels of discrimination, inequality and gender-based violence.

Since the plan was first launched on 25 March, \$1.7 billion in generous donor funding has been raised.

The updated plan released today includes a supplementary \$300 million to bolster rapid response from NGOs, on top of their specific requirements in each country; a new famine prevention envelope of \$500 million; and a sharper focus on preventing gender-based violence. With funding of \$10 billion, the plan will support 63 vulnerable countries and cover the global transport system necessary to deliver the relief.

The COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan operates alongside other complementary initiatives to protect the most vulnerable people. The initiatives include the Red Cross and Red Crescent appeals; the Global Fund’s programme to safeguard a decade of work to combat malaria, tuberculosis and HIV; the Vaccine Alliance’s (Gavi) work to keep future generations free from measles, polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases; and the UN Women’s Gender in Humanitarian Action programme. All require urgent funding.

### **Note to editors**

The COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan May Update is coordinated by the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with inputs from UN agencies and NGO consortiums. The Plan complements plans by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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