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The United Nations & COVID-19 Global Health Emergency – August 7 Update

Secretary-General Guterres stated, “COVID-19 is the greatest test” since World War II; “it is more than a health crisis. It is a human crisis.” The UN chief [released a plan](#) to counter COVID-19, which emphasizes the need for countries to act in concert and outlines ways to suppress transmission of the virus, safeguard people’s lives and their livelihoods, and learn from the crisis to build back.

Provided below is a snapshot of UN efforts overseas to combat COVID-19. This week’s edition includes information on UNDP distributing 75 ventilators and half a million masks in Indonesia, IOM conducting COVID-19 tests on 4,500 truck drivers entering Kenya, and UNICEF successfully reaching more than 5.1 million children in South Africa with remote learning support.

This reference document is by no means comprehensive of all the UN’s work; it is meant to illustrate the various ways the “UN Family” confronts a global pandemic, based on both its past actions and new methods. This document will be updated regularly but please reach out if you have any questions. For further background, the United Nations has also developed a [resource](#) to monitor the latest updates.

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

- **With the World Health Organization and others, UNDP Indonesia helped procure and distribute 75 ventilators and 500,000 masks.** Through its Global Marine Communities project, UNDP is helping fishermen cope with the impact of COVID-19 on the small-scale fisheries sector and adopt good hygiene practices. UNDP has also initiated a mass information campaign aimed at informing commuters about best practices regarding COVID-19 prevention, preparedness, and response.
- **In Laos, UNDP is repurposing personnel and medical teams from its large de-mining program to assist in tracking virus spread.** UNDP Laos also launched “[One Call Away](#),” a special service that disperses automated voice messages about COVID-19 to help 160,000 people living with disabilities, 78,000 of whom are visually impaired, access and identify verified information about the pandemic.
- **UNDP Malaysia is funding establishment of five quarantine centers in Kuala Lumpur and developing timely socioeconomic impact and recovery response plans.** UNDP has also donated 10,000 3-ply surgical masks and 2,500 units of PPE Kleenguard suits.



In Iraq, community volunteers are going door-to-door with UNDP to distribute care packages to their most vulnerable neighbors. Photo: UNDP.

World Food Programme (WFP)

- **As the spread of COVID-19 continues to accelerate across the Global South, WFP’s cargo and air passenger service in support of the global humanitarian community have continued to expand in the absence of commercial flight options.** Since May 1, nearly 12,500 passengers for 229 organizations have used the service to reach 52 destinations. This passenger service is part of WFP’s broader network of cargo hubs and airlinks that have formed the backbone of the global COVID-19 response.



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- **WFP and UNICEF are partnering on school health and nutrition in response to COVID-19, and are scaling up to target 10 million children in 30 of the most fragile countries.** The agencies will work together to ensure that children receive the meals and services they depend on during school closures, and are preparing for an integrated school health and nutrition package when schools re-open.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- FAO has launched a new comprehensive [COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme](#)—in line with the UN approach to "build back better" post-COVID-19—that aims to mitigate the immediate impacts of the pandemic while strengthening the longer-term resilience of food systems and livelihoods.
- According to the latest edition of the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#), even before the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic hit the global food systems and livelihoods of millions of people, 10 million more people were in a condition of undernourishment with respect to 2018, and 60 million more with respect to 2014.

UNICEF

- UNICEF continues its efforts to scale-up and deliver across sectors to address the needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. **To date, UNICEF has reached 2.6 billion people on COVID-19 messaging on prevention and access to services.**
- **Over 54.4 million people have received WASH supplies and services, including hygiene items, from UNICEF.** And over 2.8 million healthcare facility staff and community health workers have been trained in infection prevention and control.
- Due to social distancing constraints, UNICEF is working with governments and partners to use various platforms for outreach, monitoring, case management and training across all sectors. **Over 40.7 million children and women have received essential healthcare services in UNICEF supported facilities, and 227 million children have been supported with distance home-based learning.** More than 83,000 staff and partners have been trained on GBV risk mitigation and safe referral strategies for survivors.
- **In Vietnam, UNICEF provided technical support to the government which helped allow all 43,966 schools nationwide to implement safe school protocols that ensured a safe and healthy return of students and teachers to school.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 21.3 million students, including 80,703 children with disabilities, were supported with access to distance learning through both digital and nondigital means of communication.
- **Since the start of the pandemic, UNICEF has reached more than 5.1 million children in South Africa with remote learning support and more than 7.35 million people with messaging on COVID-19 prevention and access to services.** With the



UNICEF Vietnam, Colgate Palmolive, and DHL teamed up to distribute 250,000 bars of soaps to be used by 1.5 million children in schools and social protection centers around the country. Photo: UNICEF.



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number of cases rising, UNICEF continues to distribute critical WASH supplies. In June, UNICEF ensured essential health care services to 135,475 women and children in South Africa.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- **IOM provided COVID-19 testing to over 4,500 truck drivers on Kenya’s borders, as part of regional and national efforts to fight the global COVID-19 pandemic and reopen trade across the East and Horn of Africa.** And in Mozambique, IOM has reached 9,000 transborder truck drivers with COVID-19 prevention messages.
- To curb the spread of COVID-19, IOM South Sudan partnered with USAID to install permanent [handwashing stations](#) in busy hubs across Juba.
- **In Afghanistan, seven IOM mobile health teams have supported over 28,000 patients with treatment and screening, including referrals to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) for COVID-19 case management.** IOM Afghanistan is also engaging communities and community leaders across 8,216 villages to dispel misinformation and stigma surrounding COVID-19.
- **IOM Libya** delivered PPE to migrants held in detention centers (DCs). Non-food items and hygiene kits were also distributed to 792 migrants at the DCs. Fumigation, disinfection, and cleaning campaigns continue at disembarkation points and DCs.
- IOM continues to provide weekly updates on the [“Impact on IDPs”](#) of COVID-19. The objective of these reports is to facilitate better awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on internally displaced populations globally.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

- Pledges to UNRWA’s latest \$93m COVID appeal now stands at 62 percent, which includes funding from the EU to continue providing primary and life-saving healthcare services. **With COVID-19 on the rise in the West Bank, the new funding is helping the Agency to adapt and equip its health centers there and in Gaza.** The funding will also support the operation of medical hotlines and the dissemination of COVID-19 information by text message (SMS). Further, funding will cover hospitalization costs for approximately 5,000 urgent non-COVID-19 cases to alleviate pressure on the public health system, thus allowing the system to concentrate its attention on COVID-19 cases.

UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO)

- **In the Central African Republic, UN peacekeepers are spreading the word on COVID-19 prevention.** While conducting daily patrols, UN police officers are wearing fluorescent vests that raise awareness on WHO preventative measures to stop the spread of the virus.
- In the **D.R. Congo**, Pakistani peacekeepers are resuming scheduled rotations that were delayed by COVID-19. Peace operations have taken additional precautions to maintain operational strength and protect the health of the local community.