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The UN & COVID-19 Global Health Emergency – Jan. 12, 2021 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 UNICEF’s plans to transport up to 850 tonnes of COVID-19 vaccines per month over the course of 2021 and UNDP’s work helping procure and distribute 75 ventilators and 500,000 masks across Indonesia.

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.

UNICEF

- UNICEF, through the COVAX Facility together with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and CEPI, is leveraging its unique experience as the largest single vaccine buyer in the world by working with manufacturers and partners on the procurement of [COVID-19 vaccine doses](#), as well as logistics and storage. As the designated [COVAX](#) procurement coordinator and procurement agent, UNICEF has launched the [COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard](#)—an interactive tool for countries, partners and industry to follow the developments of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 vaccine market and the efforts of the COVAX Facility to ensure fair and equitable access for every country in the world.
- At the end of December, UNICEF and the World Economic Forum [signed a charter](#) with 18 shipping, airline and logistics companies to deliver COVID-19 vaccines. According to new estimates, [UNICEF could potentially transport up to 850 tonnes](#) of COVID-19 vaccines per month in 2021, should such quantities become available. This is more than double the average weight of vaccines UNICEF transports every month.
- With a view to meeting the COVID-19 demand for supplies expected in Q1 2021, UNICEF is ensuring supply availability and is ready for dispatch of key products, such as 117.2 million surgical masks, 14.7 million N95 respirators, 2.8 million coveralls, 8.3 million surgical gowns, 8.8 million face shields, 963 Oxygen Concentrators, and 107,688 Molecular Diagnostics.



Photo: UNICEF. Health Technology expert, Rob Matthews, inspects a batch of auto-disable syringes at the UNICEF warehouse in Copenhagen as part of UNICEF’s COVID-19 response. In 2021 UNICEF will support the equitable access to 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- In Mexico, as part of the COVID-19 Expanded Support Initiative, IOM has delivered around 900 electronic wallets to assist vulnerable migrants who have recently lost their jobs or received considerable pay cuts



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during the pandemic. Currently, close to 1,900 persons are benefiting from bi-weekly cash transfers to cover food, hygiene, health, and clothing expenses. Additionally, together with the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNHCR, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mexico, IOM organized a virtual workshop on labor migration and the prevention of human trafficking and forced labor in the context of COVID-19.

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, IOM distributed 25,000 masks to migrants and refugees in temporary reception centers, including 1,400 masks to children.
- **IOM Afghanistan has continued to provide basic health services through the deployment of seven health teams at 73 selected locations in four border provinces.** In 2020, IOM has reached over 500,000 beneficiaries with basic health care services, including outpatient consultations for general illnesses, maternal, child and neo-natal health care, reproductive health, family planning services and COVID-19 response. A total of 130,648 patients received screening with outpatient consultations with free medicines, and 14,839 persons benefitted from psychosocial counselling services.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- In **Indonesia**, UNDP 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. UNDP is expanding access to telehealth services by deploying 194 women and 84 men trained to handle cases related to gender-based violence. With multiple national and international partners, UNDP is conducting a survey of 20,000 households to analyze COVID-19's socio-economic impact. UNDP, with UN Women, UNICEF, and WFP, are also supporting the Indonesian Government in rolling out social protection targeting an estimated 33 million households throughout aid programs such as conditional cash transfers, food vouchers, and village cash transfers.
- In **Zimbabwe**, UNDP is working with the private sector to strengthen supply management systems, focusing on provision of food nationwide. UNDP is also helping the Government develop a National Preparedness & Response Plan to keep critical Government functions running, procuring PPE, providing hazard pay for frontline health workers, and augmenting diagnostic and laboratory capacities of national health facilities. UNDP is providing e-governance support for core functions of the country's executive, judicial, and legislative branches. Through its Youth Connekt platform, UNDP is also working to raise awareness, promote prevention measures, and inform the public about contact tracing and proper hygiene. In the capital, Harare, 1,320 vulnerable households (about 5,265 people) have received COVID-19 information, education, and communications material. UNDP is also expanding efforts to link victims of domestic and gender-based violence to essential services and sustain HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, and working with more than 870,000 smallholder farmers to expand community-based disease surveillance, support isolation centers, and raise awareness of how to avoid contracting or spreading COVID-19.

World Food Programme (WFP)

- In 2020, while commercial transport options were not available, WFP dispatched 118,835 cubic meters of COVID-19 related items and PPE to 160 countries on behalf of 48 organizations, transported over 26,100 humanitarian personnel to 68 destinations, and performed over 100 medevacs through its global network of logistics hubs.



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universal access project

#NOTHING BUT NETS

- **WFP continues to assist governments in supporting children during school closures, and has helped 71 countries to-date with operational support and technical assistance to safely resume education and school meals.** In Sri Lanka, WFP and the government distributed take-home rations to support 80,000 primary school children, provided the Ministry of Education with PPE for national examination centres, and is supporting the construction of hand-washing facilities in schools. In Armenia, WFP is working with the government to provide take-home rations to over 30,000 primary school children while schools are closed.
- WFP is providing food assistance to populations in COVID-19 isolation and quarantine centres. In Sierra Leone, WFP has now reached 100 percent of its target to assist over 10,000 people in the country under COVID-19 quarantine or treatment. WFP is extending this support into 2021 in many countries, including Ethiopia, Laos, and Nepal, as migrant workers continue to return at a significant rate.



Photo: WFP. Heroic efforts from our WFP drivers in Afghanistan, delivering food to remote areas before the heavy snow sets in. Last month, a convoy of 9 trucks managed to deliver more than 113mt of food across mountains and deserts, reaching more than 13,000 people.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- FAO launched the Hand-in-Hand geospatial data platform to help build stronger food and agriculture sectors post COVID-19. The [geospatial platform](#) with a large and rich set of data on food, agriculture, socioeconomics, and natural resources to help strengthen evidence-based decision-making in the food and agriculture sectors. **The platform has over one million geospatial layers and thousands of statistics series with over 4,000 metadata records, bringing together geographic information and statistical data on over ten domains linked to food and agriculture.** It also includes information on COVID-19's impact on food and agriculture.
- FAO has published a new [study](#) to provide a comprehensive overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been impacting the digital financial ecosystems of low- and-middle income countries (LMICS), and to showcase how digital financial services have been used to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on LMICSs' economies and societies, while also establishing a foundation for the longer-term digital financial inclusion of vulnerable citizens.