



The UN & COVID-19 Global Health Emergency – March 19, 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 edition includes information on the historic delivery of 600,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Ghana via the COVAX Facility and a joint ILO-UNDP project in Turkey that’s employing Syrian refugees to produce 6 million high-quality face masks.

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

- Ghana has become the first country in Africa to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses shipped via the COVAX Facility. On February 23, COVAX shipped 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine, from the Serum Institute of India to Accra. The delivery was a historic step towards the UN’s goal of ensuring equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines globally, in what will be the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history. The delivery is part of an unprecedented effort to deliver at least 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of 2021. COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), working in partnership with UNICEF as well as the World Bank, civil society organisations, manufacturers, and others. The deliveries in Ghana were followed by 324,000 doses of AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine arriving in Senegal in early March—one year after the country’s first confirmed COVID-19 case.



Photo: UNICEF. “This is a momentous occasion, as the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines into Ghana is critical in bringing the pandemic to an end. The only way out of this crisis is to ensure that vaccinations are available for all.” – UNICEF Representative in Ghana, Anne-Claire Dufay

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- As the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and climate-related crises drive acute levels of hunger higher, FAO is seeking \$1.1 billion to provide livelihood assistance to nearly 49 million people who rely on agriculture for their survival and livelihoods through interventions aimed at boosting local food



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production and nutrition, while strengthening the capacity and resilience of communities to prepare for and cope with crises, as well as providing post-disaster livelihoods support to help people resume production. FAO has also appealed for urgent aid to fight the humanitarian crisis in Yemen as UN agencies work to prevent a large-scale famine in the country. Over 16 million Yemenis are struggling to feed themselves. Despite the many challenges, [FAO helped 1.2 million people in Yemen](#) keep producing in 2020. About half of these received support in the form of livestock assistance such as vaccinations, feed, and support to dairy production. Another 400,000 received FAO assistance through the rehabilitation of water systems and infrastructure while cash-based transfers were provided to about 60,000 people.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNDP joined forces in **Gaziantep, Turkey** to support the city’s small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and workforce through production and delivery of nonwoven ultrasonic induced medical face masks and skills development. **At the first stage of the project, 1,000,000 high-quality face masks will be produced by trained locals and Syrian refugees at GESOB’s Vocational Training Center, in the city’s industrial zone where some 4,500 small and medium sized enterprises and 40,000 workforce currently operating with overall daily circulation of 100,000 people.** The protective masks will be distributed in the industrial zone free of charge to meet the increasing needs of the 4,500 SMEs with over 40,000 employees. In short, 6 million protective masks will be produced. Within the scope of the same ILO Project, 500 hand sanitizer stands have been already distributed to SMEs, each employing 5-10 people on average.



Photo: UNDP. Gaziantep, Turkey’s south-eastern province bordering Syria, is a fast-growing city with 2.2 million inhabitants and also a center of manufacturing. The city hosts more than 450,000 Syrians under Temporary Protection.