OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. On 11 March, 2020 WHO declared coronavirus as a pandemic. WHO is calling all partners to use this window of opportunity to act immediately to assist all countries to rapidly detect, diagnose and prevent the further spread of the virus.

Since the first cases were reported, WHO and its partners have been working with authorities and global experts to learn more about the virus, including how it is transmitted, the populations most at risk, the spectrum of clinical disease, and the most effective ways to detect, interrupt, and contain transmission.

Epidemiological evidence shows that COVID-19 can be transmitted from one individual to another. During previous outbreaks due to other coronaviruses, including Middle-East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), human-to-human transmission most commonly occurred through droplets, personal contact, and contaminated objects. The modes of transmission of COVID-19 are likely to be similar. The precise origin of the virus is still uncertain.

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005), following advice from the Emergency Committee. On 11 March, 2020 WHO declared coronavirus as a pandemic.

$675 MILLION | REQUIRED TO BOOST INTERNATIONAL MEASURES TO COUNTER THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

GLOBAL IMPACT AS OF 19 MARCH 2020

209,839 confirmed cases globally
8,778 deaths globally

(Data as of 19 March 2020 – source WHO)

For the latest information go to: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

Very high at the global level

Developed with the support of the Connecting Business initiative (CBI)
www.connectingbusiness.org
HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP

1. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

   Relief professionals encourage unrestricted cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance. It is recommended that companies support organizations that have demonstrated experience.

   You can make a direct contribution to COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO [www.covid19responsefund.org](http://www.covid19responsefund.org/).

2. IN-KIND DONATION OF PRIORITY MATERIALS

   For businesses wishing to contribute to the relief efforts by providing in-kind goods or services, particularly certificated medical equipment, please submit offers to [connectingbusiness@un.org](mailto:connectingbusiness@un.org) and be as specific as possible with what you wish to donate, including the time-frame for delivery, if you will cover shipping and other expenses associated with delivery. We will then guide you to the most appropriate organisations. Companies with employees, suppliers, customers in the region, or those with existing agreements with responding humanitarian organizations should reach out and provide support directly to these groups. Please note that it is important to ensure that donated items meet WHO standards and are included on the priority list of needs.

3. JOINT ADVOCACY AND SOLUTION-FINDING

   The business leaders should use their positions of influence for joint advocacy, and work together the UN and governments to identify and share innovative solutions. Key messages include:
   - The immediate priority for all stakeholders and international and national actors is to work together to contain and stop the outbreak, prevent further spread and help affected communities.
   - Businesses should work with the UN – particularly WHO – and national authorities to ensure their employees, families, business networks and communities are aware of the disease and are taking all possible precautions to avoid infection and stigma. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public can be found on the WHO website [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public).
   - Businesses in affected countries and regions are encouraged to maintain open trade and promote humanitarian corridors, by air, land and sea.
   - The private sector should take every action to support economic and social recovery and development.

4. COMMERCIAL OFFERS

   If your offer is commercial in nature, please refer to the UN Global Marketplace [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org) for more information.
CRITICAL REMINDERS

 ASSERTED The World Health Organization (WHO) is engaging more than ever with private sectors globally to ensure the supply of personal protection equipment (PPE), to aid in the fight against the outbreak. The world is facing severe shortages of PPE and the WHO discourages stockpiling of PPE in countries and areas where transmission is low, and calls on all countries and companies to work with the WHO to ensure the fair and rational use of supplies.

 ASSERTED All response activities should be guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Stakeholder engagement is key to corporate engagement in humanitarian response. Ensuring communities are at the centre of, and driving humanitarian action, is critical to ensuring appropriate and timely aid and protection reaches the people most in need. Working collaboratively with existing local institutions, social networks and civil society is critical in this endeavour.

 ASSERTED It is important to ensure that donated items meet WHO standards and are included on the priority list of needs.

 ASSERTED Business contributions to the UN response efforts must comply with the Guidelines on Cooperation between the UN and the Business Sector www.business.un.org/en/documents/guidelines

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT

For more information on how businesses can help please contact:
Karen Smith, Programme Coordinator, Connecting Business initiative
connectingbusiness@un.org

WHERE TO FIND THE LATEST INFORMATION

For an updated list of maps, situation reports, events please visit:

WHO website
www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Updated business guides and further resources and guidance for the private sector