

COVID-19 Response Report of Activities

September 2020

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



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1 | OVERVIEW

Across the globe, COVID-19 is threatening cities and communities, endangering not only public health, but also the economy and the fabric of society. COVID-19 is already having a deep, multidimensional impact and is expected to create the worst economic contraction in decades, with job losses already at an all-time high.

UN-Habitat is responding to a growing volume of requests from both national and local governments to help them prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on more than 40 years of urban experience, much of it in humanitarian situations, the organization is focusing on the city-level response to the crisis.

UN-Habitat is at the centre of helping cities be prepared for future waves of the pandemic, as well as equipped to tackle the lasting social and economic consequences. The organisation is especially concerned about the effect of the pandemic on people living in poverty, as well as communities which may be more vulnerable to the rapid changes and disruptions that the world has seen over the past months.

Following World Health Organization's declaration of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a global pandemic, in March 2020, UN-Habitat activated its emergency protocols and crisis response mechanisms. The COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan called for urgent and coordinated measures across three pillars: staff safety and security, business continuity and emergency programmatic response and coordination.

UN-Habitat intensified efforts to mobilize new resources to deliver UN-Habitat's Response Plan and scale up support to countries and cities. At the same time, UN-Habitat immediately reached out to funding partners to minimize the disruption of the yearly workplan, by reprogramming resources and channelling energy to contribute to the response within the framework of the Business Continuity Plan.

As of September, a total of \$25 million has been mobilized to fund the UN-Habitat response to COVID-19, reflecting 35 per cent of the \$72 million total identified to cover the immediate needs in 64 countries. The total portfolio includes 73 projects, with 55 of these active or with confirmed start dates before the end of the year. Another 18 are in an active pipeline and awaiting confirmation of funding pledges. From rapid response to longer-term recovery, UN-Habitat has supported the overall response in 37 countries and more than 250 cities, benefiting 6.8 million people. UN-Habitat has identified its working in slums and informal settlements as a key priority in response to the COVID-19. The majority of beneficiaries so far are residents of slums and informal settlements.

This report covers activities undertaken at the corporate, regional and country levels for the period March-August 2020. It outlines key areas which are shaping UN-Habitat's work related to COVID-19 and the consequences of the global pandemic for longer-term work on post COVID-19, learning from this crisis and building back better cities for all.



Myanmar Sittwe
market handwashing
©UNHabitat

2 | DUTY OF CARE FOR PERSONNEL

From the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, UN-Habitat has prioritized the health and well-being of personnel and partners working on the front-line response and in high-risk environments. As the global pandemic developed, UN-Habitat has followed WHO and UN Secretariat guidance and ensured strong duty of care for staff. Since March 2020, UN-Habitat has been represented by the Deputy Executive Director (DED) and the Director of the Management Advisory and Compliance Service in frequent meetings on Duty of Care of Staff both with the UN Country Team in Nairobi, and with UNHQ New York. The organization has also participated in Security Management Team (SMT) in regular SMT meetings that feature COVID-19 updates relating to the Host Country in Kenya.

The health and welfare of personnel is a key priority and UN-Habitat is working closely with regional and country offices to ensure our colleagues have the information and material needed to provide for their safety and security in line with agreed protocols. This means providing regular advice, updates and guidance to staff and have instructed them to work remotely, postpone work-related travel and replace all face-to-face meetings with video conferences.

UN-Habitat is ensuring field staff have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line essential work to continue, in coordination with partners and in line with each duty-station's public health and programmatic protocols. As a complement to this, the programme criticality has been reviewed to determine which programmes continue, which needed to be scaled up, and which needed to be temporarily suspended for security and safety reasons.

While COVID-19 poses a significant risk to the health and safety of staff, some of the key measures put in place and planned include a quarantine facility for staff arriving from outside Kenya at the Trademark Hotel, Nairobi, establishment of a UN-Nairobi Hospital (TNH) Isolation Facility for UN personnel, dependents and partners situated at the Silver Spring Hotel and the construction of a 150-bed COVID-19 treatment facility at Nairobi Hospital. Challenges remain in availing support within the East and Central Africa region, as well as other to field staff in remote locations around the world.

UN-Habitat site inspection for handwashing facilities to prevent COVID-19 in Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon ©UNHabitat



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3 | BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Crisis Management and Emergency Response

In March 2020, the Executive Director convened the UN-Habitat Crisis Management Group (CMG) which has managed UN-Habitat crisis response to COVID-19 and business continuity operations. The CMG is responsible for implementing the security recommendations and/or instructions of the Executive Director as recommended by the Designated Official in Kenya and to cover essential duties in crisis response, directly issuing instructions and communications to staff accordingly. Initially daily and currently twice weekly meetings have been held by senior managers under the CMG chaired by the Executive Director to address different aspects of COVID-19 response work and ensure business continuity during alternative working modalities (teleworking).

The CMG and its almost daily engagement in the response have allowed for real-time information and quick decision making on utilization of funds,

reprogramming of funds as well as support to UN-Habitat staff in the field.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the first emergency within the new organizational structure. The Executive Director appointed the Director of Emergency at the senior level, who has been responsible for coordinating UN-Habitat emergency response programming, resource mobilization strategies and appeals, liaising with the regional representatives to support country-led response and ensuring our emergency protocols and response are aligned with the UN system – in particular with the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Emergency Director is supported by a Core Humanitarian Programming and Coordination Team which maintains key areas of responsibility related to our humanitarian engagement globally.

Key achievement



Information gathering on COVID-19 situation in all UN-Habitat offices around the world and responding to such briefings with decisive action.



Quick decision-making on utilization of funds earmarked for UN-Habitat COVID-19 response



Immediate action to support UN-Habitat staff in the field through provision of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and with IT equipment to staff to support teleworking arrangements.



Funds allocation for COVID-19 response projects and repurposing current projects to support COVID-19 response work.



Strategic global, regional and inter-agency partnerships for humanitarian action and clear focus on urban impact of COVID-19 through advocacy and advisory role.



Improved internal processes and protocols developed in line with restructuring, which allowed for well-coordinated response to new emergencies like the UN-Habitat Beirut Crisis response, 'favelas' project in Brazil.

Organizational Coordination and Internal Communication

At the Divisional level, the Executive Director, Director of MACS and the Emergency Director held Town Halls with staff to resolve immediate issues to enable new work modality in March 2020. After these initial meetings, respective Directors, Branch, Section and Unit heads have held weekly meetings to check on staff welfare and to ensure business continuity, with a reporting back mechanism to Office of the Executive Director. A Standard Operating Procedure was also developed and endorsed to manage the delivery of support to staff and consultants.

In order to ensure that staff are giving timely, accurate and useful guidance with regard to COVID-19 and Alternate Work Arrangements, there have been weekly broadcasts to all staff, guidelines to interns to ensure their safety and well-being and a dedicated page on our intranet

(on Habnet) with COVID-19 updates. The Office of the Executive Director in collaboration with the External Relations Strategy Knowledge and Innovation Division and Management Advisory and Compliance Services also launched a weekly internal publication – *HabPost* with the first issue released on 8 April 2020.

These channels of communications were complemented by the usual localized UNON Warden System, for staff based in Nairobi that shares safety and security alerts through messaging (mainly WhatsApp). On the weekends and public holidays, Duty of Care managers have been appointed to receive since the inception of the telework modality, to receive and respond to incidents reported outside the regular working days.

Key Achievements



Early recognition of COVID-19 cases among staff with adapted support for care and quarantine as needed.



Real-time platform for reporting on progress of project implementation, including repurposing of current projects to respond to urgent needs related to the pandemic.



Psychological first-aid for staff, access to counselling and professional support, and space for staff to share concerns and positive coping skills.



15 issues of *HabPost* with over 50 contributors from the entire UN-Habitat family including staff, interns and consultants.

Major Challenges



Staff have faced many challenges while working from home including high internet/electricity bills and taking care of children with the schools closed. Support mechanisms and flexible working hours have been agreed with managers.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_17731

