UN-Habitat COVID-19 Response Plan

April 2020

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

COVID-19
RESPONSE

The world is living through an unprecedented crisis as COVID-19 continues to spread, with tens of thousands of lives lost and over two hundred countries affected. In just a few months, the pandemic has transformed the way we live, work, travel and socialize. The world's cities are generally reacting quickly to this urban humanitarian crisis and how they respond is critical to protect their population, halt the pandemic and set the scene for resilience and recovery.

Over **1,430 cities** in 210 countries affected by Covid-19

Over **95 %** of total cases in urban areas

1 billion people live in informal settlements and slums in overcrowded and inadequate housing

2.4 billion people lack adequate access to safe water and sanitation

USD 72 million needed by UN-Habitat to help meet urgent needs in cities and communities in 64 countries

The impact of COVID-19 will be most devastating in poor and densely populated urban areas, especially for the one billion people living in informal settlements and slums worldwide, with a focus on the most vulnerable including older people, people living with disabilities, women, youth and children as well as refugees, internally displaced people and migrants. Urgent action is needed to help them stay safe and healthy as measures to slow transmission such physical distancing, self-quarantine or community-wide lockdowns are almost impossible in these overcrowded areas and even the most basic hygiene measures prove challenging as water and soap are often unavailable for handwashing. The lack of any regular employment means people are still moving outside their homes to seek work to meet their daily survival needs. Meanwhile stay at home orders are putting women and girls at a greater risk of violence and preventing them from accessing protection services and social networks.

Overcrowding and lack of hand washing facilities can result in the rapid spread of the virus. In two informal settlements in Kenya's capital Nairobi. UN-Habitat has set up hand washing facilities with youth providing advice on proper techniques.

A hand washing facility in Mathare informal settlement, Nairobi, Kenya [UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu]

Bijoy Sarani Railway Slum,
Dhaka, Bangladesh
[UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn]

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UN-Habitat's integrated response: leveraging experience, expertise and partnerships to deliver solutions

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, we are focusing on the city-level response to the crisis. We are leveraging our extensive network of partners on the ground, bringing together mayors, governors, transport and utilities providers, urban NGOs, women's and youth groups, and slum-dweller community organizations. And we will bring our catalytic support to help central and local governments, communities and UN agencies to make their work more impactful.

As a centre of excellence on urban issues with a presence in 60 countries from which we support 90 countries, UN-Habitat's expertise covers a wide range of areas including housing, participatory slum upgrading, youth and gender initiatives, transport, water and sanitation, research and innovation. We will bring the power of these experts to the service of cities as they meet their specific and varied challenges over the coming months and beyond.

UN-Habitat has moved ahead quickly with implementing emergency projects and has mobilized over USD 1 million of its own internal funds to provide seed funding for scaling up in 13 countries with community preparedness, outreach and hygiene support in addition to the realignment of some projects at the country level for the immediate emergency response.

UN-Habitat is working closely within the United Nations system at the country, regional and global levels in its response to the pandemic and is supporting the three tracks outlined in the UN Secretary-General's report: *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.*

Health response:
UN-Habitat is working closely with WHO and partners to tailor public health responses and guidance in urban settings, based on our experience with the Ebola crisis in 2014.

Humanitarian response:
UN-Habitat has an extensive footprint in humanitarian settings and is working closely with humanitarian partners, focusing on the response to urban displacement settings through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

Socio-economic response:
UN-Habitat is repurposing its development portfolio in 64 countries identifying gaps through its engagement in UN Country Teams, maximizing its added value to local government and community-led responses in urban areas, informal settlements and slum and fast-tracking recovery and planning for a more resilient urban future fully aligned with the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.

UN-Habitat is leveraging its extensive network of partners on the ground, bringing together mayors, governors, transport and utilities providers, urban NGOs, women's and youth groups, and slum-dweller community organizations in the response to Covid-19 crisis

UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Policy and Programming Framework details our integrated response in line with our comparative advantage and added value.

Major Action Areas

UN-Habitat is focusing on three major response areas to tackle COVID-19 and its impact in different urban contexts and types of communities.

1 Support local governments and community driven solutions in informal settlements by:

a. Ensuring that public health measures (testing, contact tracing, etc.) are underpinned by action guaranteeing livelihoods and food security.

b. Facilitating collaboration between local governments, utility providers and community groups to ensure affordable access to water and sanitation for all.

c. Raising awareness and behaviour change in informal settlements and slums through participation and community ownership of initiatives.

d. Advocating for measures to reduce the burden of rent and mortgages, provide temporary shelter for the homeless, and repurpose buildings to isolate those infected.

e. Supporting local governments to manage safe urban mobility and transport, with a focus on those serving communities in informal settlements, while observing any movement restrictions.

2 Provide urban data evidence-based, mapping and knowledge for informed decision making by:

a. Generating and integrating community data to shape local responses, map emerging hotspots, reorganize informal markets and transport hubs, plan public spaces and buildings for health and emergency services.

b. Mobilizing an extensive network of global and local partners to support data collection, mapping and analysis using smart technologies enabling a more targeted response to emerging priority needs including water and sanitation, food, housing, health services and livelihoods.

c. Fast tracking learning, training and capacity building on how cities and communities are dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, in terms of preparedness, response and recovery.

3 Mitigate economic impact and initiate recovery by:

a. Designing economic mitigation measures and policies, taking into account the formal and informal sectors, while preparing for early recovery.

b. Boosting the fiscal capacity of municipalities and local service providers to ensure the availability of essential services.

c. Helping cities to prioritize actions to improve all dimensions of city prosperity using practical tools such as the City Prosperity Index (CPI).

d. Building a multi-disciplinary coalition with global thought leaders to develop new insights and knowledge on longer-term policy changes and new ways of working and living.

Home-based handicraft workers in Nepal have made thousands of protective masks [UN-Habitat]

Funding Requirements

The funds needed to support UN-Habitat's planned interventions in 2020 stand at USD 72 million. The breakdown by major response area and region is outlined in the table below.

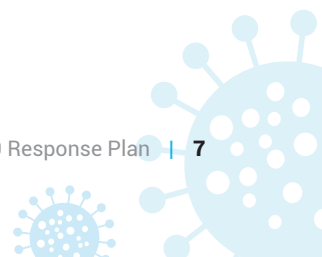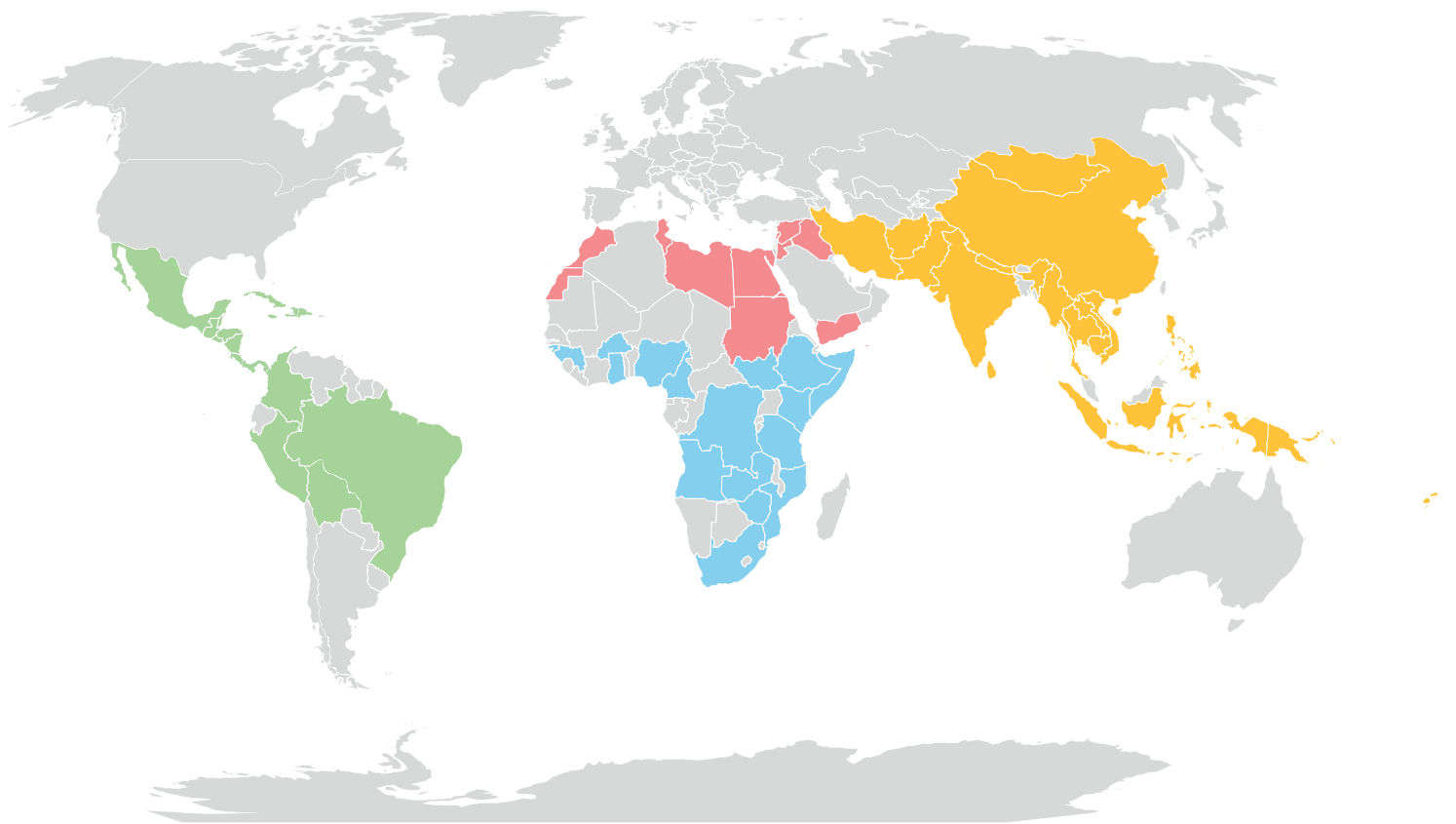| Response Areas	Africa	Arab States	Asia Pacific	Latin America	Global Programmes	Total
	20 countries	11 countries	17 countries	16 countries		64 countries
1. Innovative community driven solutions	25,890,000	16,160,000	9,000,000	700,000		**51,750,000**
2. Urban data, mapping and knowledge	910,000	1,090,000	910,000	890,000	2,200,000	**6,000,000**
3. Mitigating economic impact and initiate recovery	6,500,000	300,000	480,000	6,740,000	230,000	**14,250,000**
Total needs for 2020	**33,300,000**	**17,550,000**	**10,390,000**	**8,330,000**	**2,430,000**	**72,000,000**

Slum dwellers in Varanasi, India [Eduardo Moreno]

UN-Habitat's Support to Countries and Globally

At the global level, UN-Habitat is helping local authorities to identify successful policy, legal measures and governance approaches to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in cities, towns and communities and informal settlements so that the most vulnerable are protected. This will require measures that are tailored to different types of situations so that all urban actors including service providers, communities, civil society organizations and the private sector can work in a coordinated and integrated way to limit infections and respond to the crisis.

Building on the strength of the #BeyondTheOutbreak virtual live learning series for mayors and local leaders organized with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis, UN-Habitat will provide an online city-to-city virtual learning platform to share innovative and appropriate solutions to ensure that cities are better prepared for the future. We shall also develop an assessment tool to review policies, legislation and governance to improve future resilience and preparedness.