



©UNICEF /2020/Tremeau

# Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

## Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Global Response

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019) epidemic that originated in China has now spread to at least 25 countries and territories. As of 15 February, over 50,000 laboratory-confirmed cases and 1,500 deaths<sup>1</sup> have been reported, including adults as well as children. By 30 January, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-2019 outbreak a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' at the recommendation of the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee.

The size and evolution of the outbreak and current knowledge on its ability to be transmitted through communities, signals that the epidemic could still evolve into a pandemic, despite the efforts by Chinese authorities and the international community to contain it. UNICEF is therefore engaging in global efforts to address the outbreak, focusing on countries that have weak public health infrastructure or social support systems. Due to the lack of reliable data on paediatric cases, which has challenged efforts to assess the full impact of the outbreak on children, UNICEF is also supporting governments and partners to prioritize and monitor the situation of children and pregnant women.

Given the critical importance of accurate communication with communities across the globe in health emergencies, UNICEF is engaging its network of experienced public health and communications experts to amplify the response. UNICEF is also monitoring the secondary impacts of the outbreak on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable. For example, where governments have called for school closures or imposed strict quarantine on affected children and families, access to learning is being compromised for millions of children. UNICEF is therefore also working with partners to ensure continuity of care and education in affected communities.

In addition to the medical effects of the virus on people and health systems, a parallel outbreak of misinformation and fear has expanded, even faster than the virus, with its own consequences for the livelihoods of children and their families. A key priority is to ensure accurate and clear messaging in all communities to counter negative coping mechanisms such as the purchasing of ineffective protection equipment or loss of wages and jobs due to self-imposed isolation or quarantine.

### Humanitarian strategy

UNICEF is working closely with WHO, local governments and other United Nations country and humanitarian team partners, to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO's COVID-2019 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF will respond to the outbreak by focusing on limiting human-to-human transmission and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on the health system and affected communities. This includes response or preparedness activities that: 1) facilitate risk communication and community engagement activities, including through community-based communication, mass media and social media; 2) provide critical hygiene and medical supplies for health care and education structures; 3) ensure that children and pregnant and lactating women who are impacted by the outbreak are supported with adequate health care; 4) assess and curtail the secondary effects of the outbreak, including by facilitating continued access to education where schools may be closed or quarantines imposed; and address protection needs, including through the provision of psychosocial support to those directly or indirectly affected. With regard to risk communication, UNICEF will draw upon its expertise in communication for development and use a multisectoral approach to protect and support families and communities and build their knowledge and capacities to protect themselves and prevent further spread.

UNICEF is also engaging in social science research to better understand the social determinants of the outbreak and its consequences in communities. Working with WHO and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UNICEF is ensuring that biomedical recommendations are adapted and can be applied at the community level. UNICEF will continue to adapt its strategy as more is discovered about the disease, the extent of the outbreak and its effects on children and pregnant women.

### Snapshot (figures as of 15 February 2020):

- 50 580 laboratory-confirmed COVID-2019 cases globally
- 1,526 COVID-2019 deaths globally
- US\$ 675 million funding requirements for the global response as per the WHO SRP

### 2020 Key Areas of Response:

- Risk communication and community engagement
- Infection prevention and control (Including Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)
- Child Protection (including psychosocial support)
- Education

## Results from 2020

Given the global nature of the outbreak, UNICEF is engaging in preparedness activities and contingency planning for COVID-2019 across regions. In China, the current epicentre of the outbreak, UNICEF has been working closely with the National Health Commission and WHO since the onset of the outbreak to respond to current needs. At the request of the Government of China, UNICEF has also provided critical supplies (e.g., protective suits, masks, goggles, gloves) to protect health workers and minimize amplification of infection through nosocomial (health care-associated) transmission. Other UNICEF country offices in the East Asia and the Pacific region, including Cambodia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam are engaging with relevant partners, including WHO and government counterparts, to support inter-agency preparedness and response activities, ensure continued access to education, and provide technical support and assistance to health care facilities, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions. In Viet Nam, UNICEF has shared awareness-raising materials, including materials translated into local languages for easier and wider access. In Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste, UNICEF has developed key messages and communication materials for the public to reduce exposure and prevent COVID-2019 infection. UNICEF is also deploying additional human resource capacity to the region to enhance WASH, risk communication and community engagement activities. Globally, UNICEF is activating the U-Report social network in 55 countries to amplify risk communication messages and provide direct community feedback. Additional support requests from governments have also been received from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam, especially in relation to risk communication, medical supplies, distance learning and personal protective equipment. UNICEF is liaising with governments, local WHO counterparts and other partners to conduct contingency planning across all regions, including South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Europe and Central Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean.

### Funding requirements

The indicative funding requirement supporting UNICEF's planned interventions is US\$42.3 million with an approximate breakdown by major response areas outlined in the table. Given that COVID-2019 is a fast-evolving outbreak, the funding requirements are provisional and will be revised as needed. Due to the complexity of the crisis, flexible resources at the global level will be essential to responding where the needs are greatest.

Sector	Total (US\$)
Strengthening risk communication and community engagement including digital engagement and rumour monitoring	11,902,000
Providing critical medical, prevention and WASH supplies along with improved WASH services	10,402,529
Supporting the provision of adequate health care for women, children and vulnerable communities, including case management	11,898,741
Providing access to continuous education and child protection services	7,287,570
Data collection and analysis of disease and secondary impacts on women and children	843,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,333,840</b>

<sup>1</sup> This includes four outside of mainland China. See WHO situation reports, available at <[www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports)>.

### Who to contact for further information:

**Carlos Navarro Colorado**  
Principal Adviser, Public Health Emergencies  
Tel: +1 212 824 6029  
Email: [cnavarrocolorado@unicef.org](mailto:cnavarrocolorado@unicef.org)

**Manuel Fontaine**  
Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7163  
Email: [mfontaine@unicef.org](mailto:mfontaine@unicef.org)

**Carla Haddad Mardini**  
Director, Public Partnership Division (PPD)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7160  
Email: [chaddadmardini@unicef.org](mailto:chaddadmardini@unicef.org)