

# COVID-19 Response Report of Activities

September 2020

© UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu



**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**COVID-19  
RESPONSE**





Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), September 2020.

All rights reserved.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)  
P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO Kenya

**HSP/EB.2020/INF/3**

**Disclaimer**

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries regarding its economic system or degree of development. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorisation, on condition that the source is indicated.

Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations and its member states.

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

For any comments, corrections and suggestions please write to [unhabitat@un.org](mailto:unhabitat@un.org)



# CONTENTS

|          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>OVERVIEW</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>DUTY OF CARE FOR PERSONNEL</b>                                     | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>BUSINESS CONTINUITY</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
|          | Crisis Management and Emergency Response                              | 3         |
|          | Organizational Coordination and Internal Communication                | 4         |
| <b>4</b> | <b>COVID-19 PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE</b>                                 | <b>6</b>  |
|          | Policy and Programme Framework for COVID-19 Response                  | 7         |
|          | Response Plan and Appeal for Funding                                  | 10        |
|          | Emergency Policies and Procedures to Support Programmatic Response    | 11        |
|          | Internal Emergency Fund for Rapid Response                            | 11        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS AFTER SIX MONTHS</b>                          | <b>14</b> |
|          | Mainstreaming Urban Issues in the Global Response                     | 16        |
|          | Supporting Governments and Community Driven Solutions                 | 21        |
|          | Working with Partners   | 38        |
|          | Urban Data, Mapping and Knowledge                                     | 41        |
|          | Promoting Active Learning   | 44        |
|          | Communication and Advocacy  | 48        |
| <b>6</b> | <b>LONGER-TERM WORK ON POST-COVID-19</b>                              | <b>50</b> |
|          | Secretary General Policy Brief COVID-19 in an Urban World: Next Steps | 52        |
|          | Global Report on the State of Cities with Pandemics                   | 53        |

# 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



*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 are able to take all possible steps for their safety and security.*

## 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.



In the beginning there were inconsistencies in reporting to staff on matters relating to the pandemic because of gaps in coordination between UN-Habitat, UNON and UN Country team. This was quickly resolved with clear channels of communications and roles clearly distributed among the entities.



# UN-Habitat Covid-19 Emergency Plan

The objectives of the COVID-19 Emergency Plan are to:

**Protect staff and minimize risk** to staff health and safety and security



**Achieve a timely and orderly recovery and reconstitution of normal operations** that allows the resumption of critical functions and operational services following an emergency



**Mitigate the impact of disruptions** on UN-Habitat operations



**Preserve modes of communication** within UN-Habitat and with other UN agencies and stakeholders



Direct and guide UN-Habitat managers in **taking appropriate actions to ensure the capability exists to continue critical functions, processes and essential services**, until normal operations are reconstituted



**Establish clear decision-making structures** following emergency or crisis events



## Crisis Management Group

A UN-Habitat Crisis Management Group (CMG) has been formed to ensure staff safety and security, ensure business continuity, and manage UN-Habitat's emergency programmatic response and coordination. The CMG meets daily and is responsible for implementing the security recommendations and instructions of the Executive Director as recommended by the Designated Official, and to cover essential duties during the crisis. If you need to contact the CMG, write to [unhabitat-cmg@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-cmg@un.org).



Community members in Mathare slum, Nairobi, Kenya during COVID-19 - May 2020. @UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn

## 4 | COVID-19 PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE

Over 90 per cent of the world's COVID-19 cases are in urban areas. Cities are bearing the burden of the crisis, many with strained health systems, inadequate water and sanitation services, poor housing conditions and other challenges. This is especially the case in poorer areas, particularly the one billion people living in slums and informal settlements where the pandemic has exposed deeply rooted inequalities.

UN-Habitat has worked with its partners at global level as well as on the ground including mayors, governors, transport and utility providers, women, youth and community organizations and NGOs to

urgently address the needs of cities and adapting response to urban areas.

UN-Habitat support has focused on preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic among the most vulnerable populations in urban settlements in particular delivering water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, urban data and monitoring, and providing local authorities with messaging and advisory capacity on preparedness and response. Regional and country offices have made the programmatic framework operational, engaging in regional and country level response planning.



**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.



Resident in one of Nairobi slums use protective mask while keeping her business running.

# Policy and Programme Framework for COVID-19 Response

UN-Habitat has a clear added value in supporting national and local authorities as they engage in different stages of COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery. In this direction, UN-Habitat developed the *COVID-19 Policy and Programme Framework* intended to provide guidance for our global, regional and country-level action. This has been a key instrument to help focus and scale UN-Habitat's contribution to the overall response led by national and local governments, UN agencies and local partners. The framework is in alignment with the Secretary-General's report on 'Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19'.

UN-Habitat programmatic response focuses on urban areas as they have been hit hard in view of their density, the mobility and the connectivity of its population, while the knock-on economic impact will be felt far beyond city boundaries, considering their dominant role in national economies. It is relevant in different contexts and builds on acquired learning or experience from the response on the ground. For example, UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Policy and Programming Framework is being currently updated in view of the SG's report and the UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.



UN-Habitat is focusing on four 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 – including other thematic entry-points in urban areas.

UN-Habitat has over 40 years of experience in mobilizing its planning capacity, supporting community-driven urban recovery and resilience programming at scale during and after crisis, and providing key support roles to national governments and local governments. Key areas of support:



Ensuring that public health measures and potential networks (either formal or informal) provided or supported by local government (testing, contact tracing, etc.) are underpinned by action guaranteeing livelihoods and food security.



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



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



Mitigating the impact on lacking access to adequate housing and advocating for measures to reduce the burden of rent and mortgages, provide temporary shelter for the homeless, and repurpose buildings and/or facilities to isolate those infected.



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 Incremental profiling of urban contexts: urban data, mapping and knowledge for informed decision making.



Mapping and spatial analysis is key to inform decision-making. It is critical to map and understand the emergence of hotspots and their relationship to essential services. It can also help to map, predict and monitor population movements. This mapping and analysis can shape and localize response. Key areas of support:



Understanding of the nature and complexity of cities (urban systems) which allows actors to tailor the COVID-19 response to urban areas.



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



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.



Shape and localize response: re-organizing informal markets and urban transport hubs, allocating space or buildings to be repurposed for emergency health services.



Profile performance's weaknesses in the existing urban systems, taking into consideration sectorial and crosscutting issues, to focus on more effective response.

### 3 Mitigate economic impact and initiate recovery.

Critical work is needed to boost the fiscal capacity of municipalities and local service providers, so they can ensure essential services. UN-Habitat can support mapping of local economic impact and design of economic mitigation measures and policies, considering both the formal and informal sector, while preparing for early recovery. Key areas of support:



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



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



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



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.

### 4 Promoting active learning on policy measures and practices (cross-cutting).

A key role for UN-Habitat is to fast-track learning on how cities and communities—especially in informal settlements and slums—are dealing with the COVID-19 crisis across the continuum of preparedness, response and recovery. By supporting and facilitating structured city-to-city learning, these connections can be made in real time to exchange and identify solutions or innovative approaches. Key areas of support:



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.



Enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support preparedness, response and recovery in urban areas.



## Response Plan and Appeal for Funding

On 22 April 2020, UN-Habitat launched an urgent COVID-19 Response Plan for 64 countries focusing on immediate action in poor and densely populated areas. UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Response Plan includes over 100 proposals from regions and Head Quarters and aimed for an envelope of over \$72 million for 12 months. This catalytic support aims to amplify the impact of ongoing initiatives by central and local governments, communities and other UN agencies.

Over 70 per cent of the support is planned to help informal settlements to improve affordable access to water and sanitation, raise awareness about COVID-19, and support initiatives to prevent people becoming homeless by providing temporary shelter or alternative income generating activities. Ensuring safe transport and repurposing buildings to isolate those infected are other priority areas.

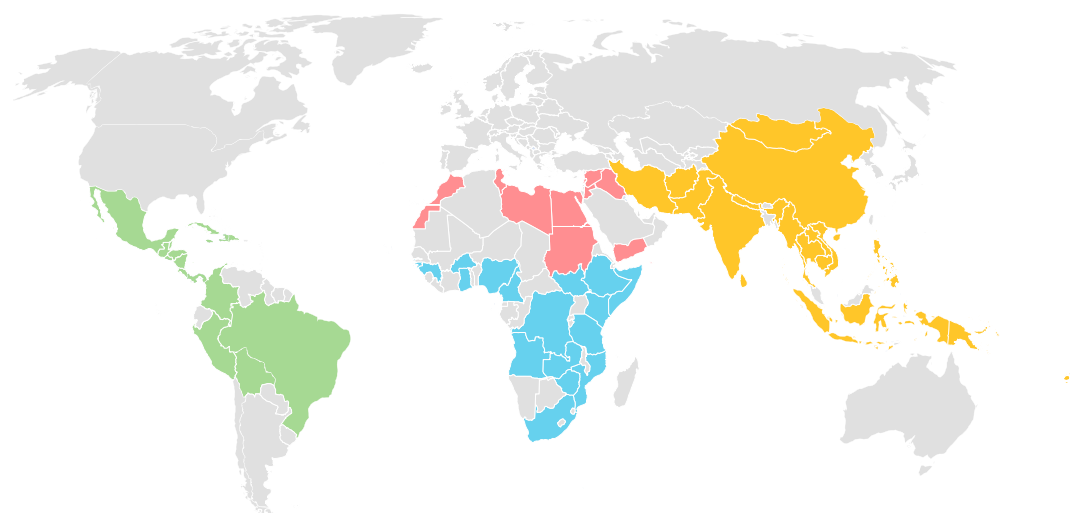
To ensure that urban responses, such as provision of water, food, housing, health services and livelihoods are targeted to the most vulnerable and high-risk areas, UN-Habitat plans to assist with data collection, mapping of existing and emerging hot spots and analysis working with its network of local and global partners. This will help evidence-based decision making by local governments and key stakeholders.

As the pandemic plunges the world's economy into a global recession, UN-Habitat response plan also focused on policies and measures to mitigate the local social and economic impact of COVID-19 and is working with a coalition of global thought leaders and stakeholders in public and private spheres.

### 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        |
| <b>Total needs for 2020</b>                         | <b>33,300,000</b> | <b>17,550,000</b> | <b>10,390,000</b> | <b>8,330,000</b> | <b>2,430,000</b>  | <b>72,000,000</b> |



## Emergency Policies and Procedures to Support Programmatic Response

To respond quickly to the escalating needs for response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, UN-Habitat continued to review and develop its emergency protocols and procedures, working to streamline processes and improve our capacity to respond to this pandemic.

Key documents have been developed to guide and facilitate UN-Habitat's work in the response to COVID-19. These documents are in alignment with UN-Habitat Emergency Plan and COVID-19 Policy and Programmatic Framework. Such policies and procedures will also support UN-Habitat's future work and humanitarian response.

### Results framework for COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 Results Framework identifies key indicators linked to each thematic response area, as outlined in the Policy and Programmatic Framework and the Response Plan and should guide the design and implementation of all COVID-19 response project proposals. It allows the organization to aggregate results across activities, countries and regions, and is a critical tool to measure the outcome and impact of all projects contributing to UN-Habitat's COVID-19 response.

The COVID-19 Results Framework includes a menu of indicators that shall be used in all project proposals to measure human impact and institutional outcomes. All indicators are extracted from the Results Framework of the Strategic Plan 2020-23 and the Global Indicators Framework of the SDGs. This ensures alignment and contribution to the implementation of corporate and global mandates.

### Streamlining and Fast-tracking review and approval of projects

As the efforts to mobilize resources for the COVID-19 Response Plan intensified, the numerous projects proposals related to preparedness, response and recovery went through a review and pre-approval process focusing on substantive and strategic aspects.

New procedures have been put in place for assessing existing and new project proposals

related to UN-Habitat COVID-19 Response and fast-tracking measures necessary to their timely implementation. The process counts on a review committee to prioritize the proposals and recommend areas for improvement. Further programming and normative support may also be suggested for more intensive development of priority projects.

The final approval of COVID-19 Response proposals follow the corporate Project Review Committee guidelines, with accelerated 48-hour turnaround.

### Review of UN-Habitat Emergency Response Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to strengthen the role of UN-Habitat in humanitarian affairs and improve the ability of the organization to respond to post-conflict and post-disaster emergencies. The definition of an emergency is a threatening condition that requires urgent action. UN-Habitat is a member of the UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (IASC), which comes with obligations to follow guidelines developed for improved coordination and humanitarian assistance.

## Internal Emergency Fund for Rapid Response

To respond quickly to the escalating needs for prevention and preparedness for the COVID-19 global pandemic, UN-Habitat created an emergency fund (\$1.5 million) to support quick-impact projects demonstrating rapid and measurable results in alignment with UN-Habitat COVID-19 Policy and Programmatic Framework.

Fifty-six (56) proposals were submitted and assessed against pre-defined criteria. A total of thirteen (13) project proposals were recommended for funding, requiring \$1,360,750. The review committee further recommended the allocation of \$100,000 to support the implementation of Kenya COVID-19 Action Plan in-line with stated commitments to enhance programming in UN-Habitat's host country. Seven projects are completed and another 6 are planned to end by October 2020. Results are presented in the following chapters.



### Emergency Fund Proposals were assessed against the following criteria

1. UN-Habitat operational presence and ongoing programming
2. Demonstrated cross-agency collaboration for a more integrated response
3. Activities that re-orient or scale ongoing work within existing arrangements with partners
4. Potential to leverage further actions led by key other partners
5. Project's contribution to broader COVID-19 response to urban areas
6. Demonstrated direct impact and results within one month of funding
7. Direct impact which can trigger further community-level action beyond the project scope

### UN-Habitat Emergency Fund Projects

|                    |         |  |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| <b>Ghana</b>       | 100,000 | Emergency WASH in Ga Mashie as a Rapid Response to the spread of COVID-19  |
| <b>Guinea</b>      | 99,348  | Multi-stakeholder solidarity response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Greater Conakry  |
| <b>Kenya</b>       | 200,000 | Implementation of the CoVID-19 Action Plan for Kenya   |
| <b>Mozambique</b>  | 50,000  | COVID-19 Rapid Response within the scope of UN-Habitat Building Back Better and Resilience Building Umbrella Programme     |
| <b>Fiji</b>        | 65,647  | COVID-19 Community awareness and preparedness in informal settlements in Fiji (CAPIS FIJI)                                 |
| <b>Philippines</b> | 100,000 | CoVID-19 Response as We Rebuild Marawi   |
| <b>Myanmar</b>     | 77,900  | Enhancing Community Resilience Against CoVID-19 project in Myanmar   |
| <b>Iraq</b>        | 99,855  | Rapid Response to COVID-19 in Iraq through Mobile Handwashing Trailers   |
| <b>Lebanon</b>     | 100,000 | Equipping vulnerable urban populations including refugees and migrants with WASH facilities to mitigate impact of CoVID-19 |
| <b>Syria</b>       | 210,000 | Mitigation Measures in Syrian Cities for CoVID-19  |
| <b>Bolivia</b>     | 68,000  | Food security to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in vulnerable neighborhoods  |
| <b>Brazil</b>      | 100,000 | Monitoring and Evidence-Based Rapid Response in Informal Settlements of Maceio & Employing Knowledge                       |
| <b>Mexico</b>      | 90,000  | Support local governments to prepare and implement a recovery plan during and after the Covid-19 pandemic                  |





FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UN-HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESENTED BY  
CHANDARIA FOUNDATION

UN-HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## 5 | PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS AFTER SIX MONTHS

COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of our urban systems like never before. Across the globe, the pandemic has taken root in cities and proven to be a potent disruptive force to the “engines of economic growth”. The pandemic has very clearly demonstrated that while national and state governments play a crucial role towards a systematic and unified approach to response and mobilizing resources, it is the cities and urban systems where the battle is being fought. Making cities function in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic is proving to be the biggest challenge. UN-Habitat is committed to addressing it.

Following the outbreak, 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, following the outbreak, UN-Habitat immediately started discussing with donors, and within the framework of its Business Continuity Plan, ways to minimize the disruption of the yearly workplan, by reprogramming resources and channelling energy to contribute to the response.

In the past six months, since March 2020, a total of \$25 million has been mobilized to UN-Habitat COVID-19 response, 35 per cent of the required

\$72 million. This includes \$16.5 million of new funding and reprogrammed funding from existing projects, and \$8.5 million in funding pledges. The total portfolio includes 73 projects, of which 55 are ongoing or about to start, and 18 awaiting confirmation of funding pledges.

From rapid response to longer-term recovery, UN-Habitat has supported the overall response led by national and local governments, UN agencies and local partners in 37 countries and more than 250 cities, benefiting 6.8 million people. UN-Habitat has identified the work in slums and informal settlements as one of its key priority in response to the COVID-19. Most of the beneficiaries so far are residents of slums and informal settlements.

The agency contributed to key global response frameworks, mainstreaming urban issues and bringing expertise on principles and approaches to improve access to urban services. At the same time, the regional and country offices have ensured coordination and leveraged key networks and partnerships to respond quickly. More than 290 partners are contributing to UN-Habitat’s response in different forms at global, national and local levels.

Home-based  
handicraft workers in  
Nepal making masks  
and other material  
to protect against  
COVID-19 ©UNHabitat



# COVID-19 Response



n. of projects:

**71**



n. of beneficiaries

**6.8 million**



operating in

**37 Countries**  
and benefiting 262 cities



n. of donors:

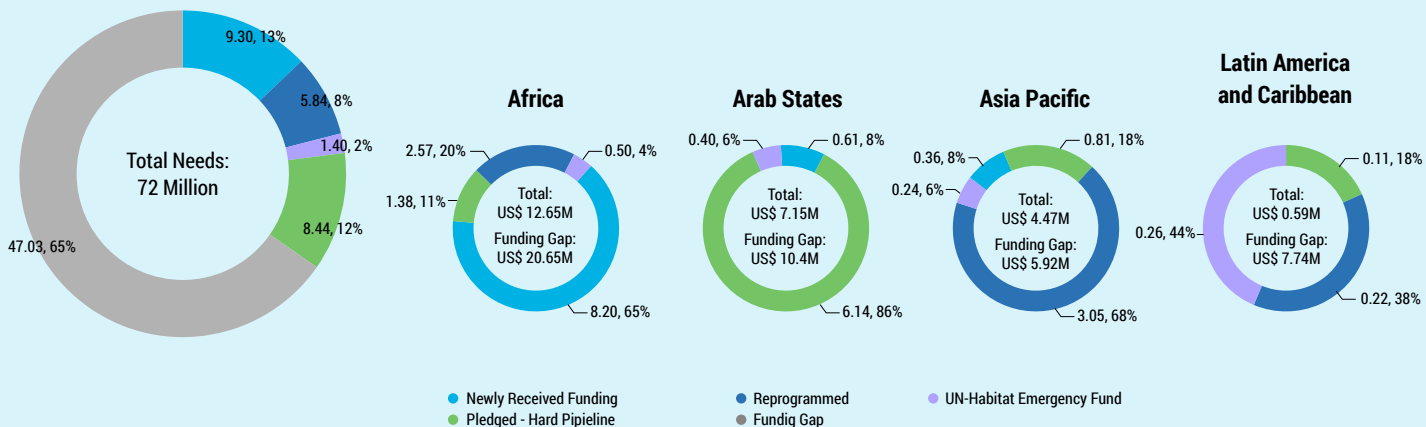
**28**



n. of partners

**+250**

## COVID-19 Funding Summary (US\$ millions)



## Mainstreaming Urban Issues in the Global Response

The engagement of UN-Habitat at the highest level of humanitarian coordination in the UN System has contributed to broader coordinated response, as well as greater visibility of the specific challenges of the COVID-19 response in humanitarian crises in human settlements and cities. In particular, UN-Habitat contributed to specific advocacy and funding appeals related to the crisis, such as the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) launched in March. Through such engagement UN-Habitat, has built strategic global and regional partnerships and further leveraged its advocacy and advisory roles to support UN agencies and other stakeholders.

UN-Habitat has also contributed to mainstream urban issues in the development of globally and regionally mandated resources such as the *UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and the Secretary General Policy Brief COVID-19 in an Urban World*. The later, a landmark in the recognition of urban issues as central to the causes, the response and the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19**

This report sets out the framework for the United Nations' urgent socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19, putting in practice the UN Secretary-General's Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity report on the same subject. It is one of three critical components of the UN's efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better, alongside the health response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the humanitarian response, as detailed in the UN-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

UN-Habitat successfully co-led with UNAIDS the drafting of the pillar on "Investing in Resilience: Community-led Resilience and Response Systems", strengthening the focus on the urban nature of the pandemic, the need to connect community level resilience with urban resilience and the necessity to ensure incremental analysis of urban disaggregated data ensuring a quick transition from response to recovery. The pillar also points out the need to include a strong focus on informal settlements and slums which are often invisible and disproportionately vulnerable taking into account the long-term systemic lack of

investments in basic services, including water and sanitation.

### **Global Humanitarian Response Plan**

To confront the unprecedented worldwide challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in situations of humanitarian concern, the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) was developed with all contributing members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Top UN officials on 25 March 2020, launched a \$2 billion coordinated GHRP to fight COVID-19 in some of the world's most vulnerable countries facing conflict, forced displacement and food insecurity.

UN-Habitat has joined the United Nations coordinated inter-agency appeal providing inputs in terms of preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic among the most vulnerable populations in urban settlements in areas such as WASH, modelling of movement in urban areas, messaging and advisory capacity to local city authorities on preparedness and response. UN-Habitat was involved in the submission of 10 proposals in the first round. \$50,000 rapid response funds were allocated to Lebanon.

UN-Habitat also contributed to the second iteration GHRP launched on May 2020. The updated plan aims for an envelope of \$6.9b with approximately \$1b already secured for emergency relief on the country level.

### **UN-Habitat's contribution to key policy and technical guidance on COVID-19**

- [IASC Interim Guidance on Scaling-up COVID-19 Outbreak in Readiness and Response Operations in Camps and Camp-like Settings \(Inputs\)](#). Developed by IFRC, IOM, UNHCR and WHO).
- IASC Interim Guidance Public Health and Social Measures for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Low Capacity and Humanitarian Settings. Developed by ICRC, IFRC, IOM, NRC, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, WHO in consultation with IASC members.
- [Practical actions in cities to strengthen preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond](#). An interim checklist for local authorities
- Annex 1. [Special Considerations for COVID-19 Outbreak Readiness and Response to support those who reside in Urban Informal Settlements and Slums](#) (UN-Habitat, UNICEF, IFRC)

- [IASC Interim Guidance on Localisation and the COVID-19 Response](#) (inputs)
- [IASC Key Messages COVID-19 Response: Applying the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#).
- UN-Habitat & UNICEF [Interim technical note on water, sanitation and hygiene for COVID-19 response in slums and informal urban settlements](#).
- UN-Habitat & WHO [Briefing Enhancing Access to Services for Migrants in the Context of COVID-19 Preparedness, Prevention, and Response and Beyond](#).
- WHO [Interim Guidance Preparedness, prevention and control of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) for refugees and migrants in non-camp settings](#) (inputs).

### UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief COVID-19 in an Urban World

The Policy Brief is part of a series of policy statement issues by the Secretary-General to advise governments on possible action in a number of key policy areas. It points to the fact that COVID-19 is an urban crisis with some 90 per cent of all reported COVID-19 cases are in cities and towns. It also highlights the necessity to take urgent action to ensure cities remain resilient to absorb future challenges related to climate change and migration.

The Secretary-General's Policy Brief is a powerful instrument to put us on the right path to deal with the crisis and to seize the opportunity to do things differently in the recovery, so that we can create greener, healthier and more resilient cities. The transformative potential of urbanization towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be lost. The brief also highlights how we can support local governments in their front-line role and refers to the effort of local government networks such as UCLG, C40, ICLEI, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and many represented in the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments to share solutions and learn lessons as we go forward.

The Policy Brief draws on these positive examples and outlines immediate and long-term action in three vital areas: 1. Tackling inequalities and development gaps 2. Strengthening the capacities of local actors, particularly local governments 3. Working towards a recovery that is green, inclusive and resilient

UN-Habitat led a collaborative process with UNDP, UNDESA, UNEP, UNICEF, UNODC, ILO, WHO, OHCHR, all Regional Economic Commissions and several local government networks to provide the necessary inputs to the Office of the Secretary-General. The Policy Brief is an important instrument to encourage more integrated policy support across the UN system at global, regional and country level.

#### Impact of COVID-19 in Urban Areas



Urban density does not inevitably correlate with higher virus transmission. Cities are largely vulnerable because of their sheer size and connectivity. The pandemic has exposed deep inequalities in how people live in cities, and how cities serve their residents. The already vulnerable have suffered most, in particular in areas with overcrowding, inadequate housing and lack of access to sanitation.



Air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have fallen sharply. Evidence suggests poor air quality is correlated with higher COVID-19 mortality rates.



COVID-19 shutdown measures have had economic impacts far beyond city boundaries as urban economies account for 80 per cent of global GDP.



Cities are hubs of resilience and human ingenuity. This crisis has shown city dwellers at their best, demonstrating extraordinary solidarity and adapting overnight to new ways of working and functioning.

#### More information:

[Launch Video](#) by the Secretary-General

[Launch Video](#) by UN-Habitat Executive Director

UN Secretary-General's [Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World](#)

Integrating health in urban and territorial planning: WHO & UN-Habitat sourcebook for urban leaders, health and planning professionals

Many cities face health threats linked to urban and territorial planning. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight the importance of safe distancing in cities, a new sourcebook launched by WHO and UN-Habitat provides a wealth of useful information on ensuring human health is a key consideration for city planning. The sourcebook, Integrating Health in Urban and Territorial Planning, is designed to guide decision makers from the public health, urban and territorial planning sectors including planners, city managers, health professionals and others towards developing cities planned and built with a focus on human and environmental health.

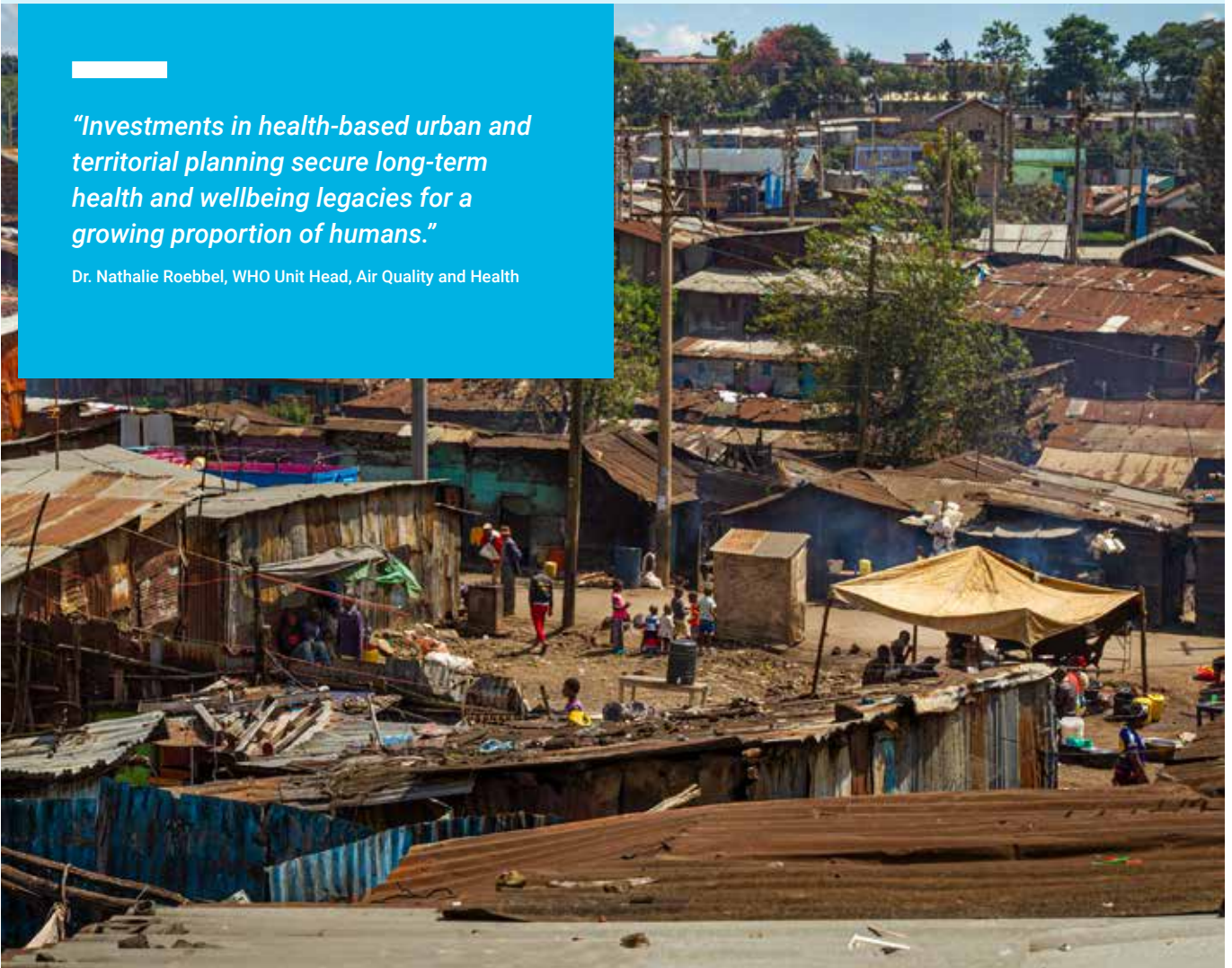
The sourcebook offers a comprehensive variety of resources, including frameworks, entry points, guidance and tools, as well as specific case studies illustrating recommended approaches to bring together planning and public health. The tools include a variety of health appraisal, analysis and data tools, such as city-wide public space assessment, health impact assessment, cumulative risk and comparative risk assessments, spatial epidemiology, online analytical tools, citizen science, city dashboards and city profiling.

**More information:**

<https://unhabitat.org/urban-planning-crucial-for-better-public-health-in-cities>

*“Investments in health-based urban and territorial planning secure long-term health and wellbeing legacies for a growing proportion of humans.”*

Dr. Nathalie Roebbel, WHO Unit Head, Air Quality and Health



Africa is also facing the dire consequences of the crisis, necessitating timely response, recovery and rebuilding policies and strategies.

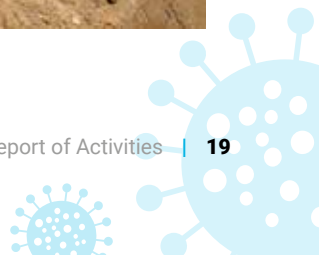
The Report on COVID-19 in African Cities produced by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Shelter Afrique, takes an in-depth look at the impacts, responses and policy pathways related to COVID-19 in the context of cities in Africa.

The Report has found that the quality and nature of Africa's urbanization exacerbates transmission rates of infectious diseases like COVID-19 and makes containment and response measures harder. The report proposes several interventions to promptly and effectively address the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic in Africa at the urban level led by national and local governments supported by international and regional development institutions. More than 600 people joined the virtual launch of the Report on 16 June.

**More information:**

<https://unhabitat.org/COVID-19-in-africa-cities-impacts-responses-and-policies>

Community members in Mathare slum, Nairobi, Kenya during COVID-19. @UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn



## COVID-19 Wuhan Guidance Papers

COVID-19 broke out at an epidemic scale in Wuhan, in January 2020 with initial lessons on responding being learned in this metropolitan city of 10 million people but also in the secondary and county towns of Hubei Province. A wide range of measures were implemented to roll back the epidemic and restart the social-economic recovery. When municipal departments re-opened, UN-Habitat reached out in order to learn about and share the know-how around the response.

Findings are compiled in the COVID-19 Wuhan Guidance Papers released globally on 2 September. UN-Habitat together with its partners in Wuhan and with collaborating national agencies, published four detailed papers on the emerging experiences on responding to COVID-19 in Chinese cities and towns.

The first two Papers deal with community management approaches and with the provision of non-hospital spaces for care and isolation. Two more Papers are about smart technologies, shedding light on the quick introduction of QR Apps and Big Data for tracking and mapping of people, showing how tracking and mapping were used to steer the resumption of the economy and community life.

In 2020 and 2021, UN-Habitat and WLSP will continue their collaboration, with a strong emphasis on urban health.

### More Information:

<https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-china-and-partners-in-wuhan-share-COVID-19-response-experiences>

## Plan for Social Reconstruction in Central America

On 06 May, the Central American Social Integration Council (CIS) representing 8 countries of the region, made up of National Ministries in charge for social development and inclusion adopted a Declaration committing to rapidly prepare a regional *Plan for Social Reconstruction in response to the COVID-19 crisis*. This Declaration was the first of this kind approved globally by a regional grouping.

The proposed Plan for Social Reconstruction focus on three main pillars being social protection, employment and addressing vulnerabilities in informal settlements including through comprehensive urban regeneration approaches to leverage the opportunity of sustainable urban development as a driver for economic recovery.

Recognizing the support received from the UN system particularly by FAO, ILO, UN-Habitat and the WFP, as well as other key partners like the Eurosocial + Program, IDB (Interamerican Development Bank), UHPH (Urban Housing Practitioners Hub) and the Cities Alliance, the declaration is also a call for strengthening regional coordination and integration to advance poverty alleviation and inequality reduction in line with the Agenda 2030.

### More information:

[https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/05/segunda\\_declaracion\\_especial\\_del\\_cis\\_unidos\\_por\\_la\\_reconstruccion\\_social.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/05/segunda_declaracion_especial_del_cis_unidos_por_la_reconstruccion_social.pdf)



## Supporting Governments and Community-Driven Solutions

### Emergency Fund for Rapid Response

In the beginning of the pandemic, UN-Habitat put extra efforts to support rapid response at country level. An Emergency Fund of \$1,350,000 supported 13 projects proposals in 13 countries and created opportunities for new engagement and upscaling response.

The 3-5 months projects are all aligned with UN-Habitat's Programmatic Framework and focused mostly on improving access to water and sanitation through hand-washing facility, sustainable recovery approaches and data. Seven

of the 13 Rapid Response Projects funded by UN-Habitat Emergency Fund are completed. The remaining six projects will be finished by the end of October 2020.

The preliminary results confirm the importance of this seed funding to leverage UN-Habitat's capacity to respond quickly, improve countries and cities' response and create opportunities for scaling up funding and initiatives. Around 5 million people and 145 cities benefited directly from the projects. Additional \$685,000 have been mobilized through this fund, a figure that is likely to increase once all projects are completed.

### Key Figures



**\$1.3 million**  
funding in 13  
projects



**Working with 92**  
partners



**13 countries and**  
145 cities



**5 million people**  
benefiting



**\$685,000 additional**  
funds mobilized for  
scaling up response

Community volunteers visiting an informal settlement in Yangon, Myanmar to provide households with information around COVID-19 prevention and treatment and combat misinformation © Bedar Social Development Group.



## UN-Habitat Emergency Fund – summary of 13 Rapid Response Projects

| Location             | Funds   | Title of Project  | N. of cities involved | Results   | % of impl. | Direct beneficiaries |
|----------------------|---------|---|-----------------------|---|------------|----------------------|
| AFRICA<br>Ghana      | 35,000  | Emergency WASH in Ga Mashie as a Rapid Response to the spread of COVID-19   | 3                     | Production of 10 city level handwashing facilities, 185 household handwashing facilities, 4000 masks, 6000 units of 500litre liquid soap, 3720 200mls containers of sanitizers, 32 boxes of sanitized wipes, installation of 3 10,000-liter water storage tanks and 6 standpipes, sensitization on COVID-19, fumigation of public toilets, support for the production of a children's' educational book on COVID-19.  | completed  | 300,000              |
| AFRICA<br>Guinea     | 45,503  | Multi-stakeholder solidarity response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Greater Conakry   | 5                     | Building of a coalition of local and national governments, a socio-economic impact survey for 500 households that will trigger policy recommendations for building back better, training of community leaders, implementation of social distancing measures in 10 mobility hubs and provision of prevention kits reaching out to about 160,000 residents in Conakry   | completed  | 160,000              |
| AFRICA<br>Kenya      | 247,000 | Implementation of the CoVID-19 Action Plan for Kenya  | 6                     | The project is implemented through the UN-Habitat COVID-19 Action Plan for Kenya. Key results include:<br>(i) 3 Resource Centers and 2 One Stop Youth Centers availed for training of community youth volunteers on COVID-19 mitigation, sensitization and awareness campaigns, and disseminating messages.<br>(ii) 65 handwashing stations set up in 16 informal settlements across 6 counties<br>(iii) 176 youth volunteer assistants trained<br>(iv) 3.4 million hand washes in six counties<br>(v) 9,000 small informal sector traders in Kibera adopted handwashing stations within their business premises because of UN-Habitat's interventions.                                   | completed  | 4,300,000            |
| AFRICA<br>Mozambique | 50,000  | UN-Habitat COVID-19 Rapid Response within the scope of UN-Habitat Building Back Better and Resilience Building Umbrella Programme | 4                     | (i) Municipalities have technical staff with increased capacity in management and monitoring handwashing facilities in high-density urban areas<br>(ii) Vulnerable people in informal settlements have access to reliable information on COVID-19 prevention and hygiene and protection and Municipalities have better access to water and sanitation facilities;<br>(iii) Activists have increased knowledge of awareness raising messages spreading with focus in urban areas   | completed  | 18,193               |
| ASIA-PACIFIC<br>Fiji | 65,647  | COVID-19 Community awareness and preparedness in informal settlements in Fiji (CAPIS FIJI)  | 4                     | (i) 70 awareness raising campaigns delivered in target informal settlements<br>(ii) 9925 households have received WASH support and have increased access to information material on COVID-19 prevention, physical distancing, and hygiene<br>(iii) 70 Community Focal points are established and contact details are collected in central database (located within MHCD)<br>(iv) 100 community-based monitoring groups established Support food security of over 200 families in lockdown/ quarantine<br>(v) Establishment over 100 households in setting appropriate urban gardens for subsistence farming<br>(vi) Establishment of at least 2 community gardens in informal settlements | 86%        | 2,020                |

| Location                    | Funds   | Title of Project   | N. of cities involved | Results  | % of impl. | Direct beneficiaries |
|-----------------------------|---------|--|-----------------------|--|------------|----------------------|
| ASIA-PACIFIC<br>Philippines | 100,000 | CoVID-19 Response as We Rebuild Marawi   | 1                     | (i) support internally displaced families living in transitional/temporary housing sites in Sagonsongan and Boganga, families in host and remote barangays, local authorities, the CoVID-19 Incident Command Center (ICC) of the local government of Marawi, women<br>(ii) 3,638 households in 25 communities were provided easy access to food and basic essentials<br>(iii) distribution of 7,500 small seed packets for fast-growing vegetable varieties to 1,500 households  | completed  | 5,538                |
| ASIA-PACIFIC<br>Myanmar     | 77,900  | The Enhancing Community Resilience Against CoVID-19 project in Myanmar   | 2                     | (i) Rapid assessment of informal settlements used by Myanmar COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan<br>(ii) Households in 115 strategic locations supported with public access to hand washing<br>(iii) 32 schools in townships with high density of informal settlements supported with handwashing stations<br>(iv) IEC materials distributed to 13, 769 households, 3 health centers and 3 township education offices.<br>(v) Public protection enhanced through distribution of 112,580 surgical masks and 27,500 cloth masks<br>(vi) 152 community volunteers in informal settlements supported through bi-monthly livelihood support<br>(vii) 30 health workers of 3 health centers serving informal settlements supported with essential support kits. | completed  | 60,584               |
| ARAB STATES<br>Iraq         | 99,855  | Rapid Response to COVID-19 in Iraq through Mobile Handwashing Trailers   | 5                     | (i) Water deprived settlements, i.e. WASH "hot-spots" where to focus prevention measures and medium-term WASH investments, identified in partnership with local authorities;<br>(ii) GIS mapping portal developed for the monitoring of WASH "hot-spots" to be shared with municipal focal points<br>(iii) Seven mobile, low cost and easy-to-operate handwashing station are deployed to WASH "hot-spots", branded by the local authorities and/or private sponsors (e.g. soap/detergent producers)<br>(iv) Direct health & hygiene advice provided to citizens in the WASH "hot-spots" in addition to the display of public messaging  | 70%        | 25,000               |
| ARAB STATES<br>Lebanon      | 100,000 | Equipping vulnerable urban populations including refugees and migrants with WaSH facilities to mitigate impact of CoVID-19 | 4                     | (i) 10 handwashing stations were installed<br>(ii) Hygiene supplies and water reservoirs for at least 6 months<br>(iii) Mobilization of the local actors and communities; Awareness raising plan was developed to accompany implementation and awareness material developed to be posted on HWSs<br>(iv) Local youths' groups, secondary caretakers from the local communities, and municipal police trained   | completed  | 14,888               |



| Location             | Funds   | Title of Project  | N. of cities involved | Results   | % of impl. | Direct beneficiaries |
|----------------------|---------|---|-----------------------|---|------------|----------------------|
| ARAB STATES<br>Syria | 210,000 | Mitigation Measures in Syrian Cities for CoVID-19   | 2                     | (i) scaled up preparedness and response operations at the municipal level and strengthened local community engagement in the Covid-19 response, through pre-existing community-based structures and volunteers' networks.<br>(ii) Improved hygiene and sanitation conditions especially for the most vulnerable populations located in densely populated urban areas and informal settlements (one third of Homs city and Hama city are informal settlements).  | 50%        |                      |
| LAC<br>Bolivia       | 68,000  | Food security to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in vulnerable neighborhood                                | 7                     | The project aims at providing easy and cheap access to food supplies to the most vulnerable neighborhoods in La Paz metropolitan area. Results to date:<br>(i) produced and revised six municipal food contingency plans which identify highly vulnerable to food insecurity communities and populations in both urban and rural areas of each municipality.  | 70%        | 145,125              |
| LAC<br>Brazil        | 100,000 | Monitoring and Evidence-Based Rapid Response in Informal Settlements of Maceió & Employing Knowledge      | 2                     | This project aims to support the Government of Alagoas and other stakeholders to create and prioritize recovery actions. Results to date:<br>(i) An innovative telephone/WhatsApp based survey methodology<br>(ii) Incremental analysis and reports CoVID-19 in informal settlements in Maceió<br>(iii) Technical support on CoVID-19 response for informal settlements<br>(iv) Targeted pilot actions using private donations and government resources<br>(v) Communication and awareness campaign targeted at slums in Maceió<br>(vi) Youth mobilization through the UN-Habitat Community Champions on CoVID-19 | 50%        | 101,111              |
| LAC<br>Mexico        | 90,000  | Support local governments to prepare and implement a recovery plan during and after the Covid-19 pandemic | 100                   | This project aims to guide municipal governments in developing a local strategy for social and economic recovery in the context of the COVID-19. Results to date:<br>(i) COVID 19: Recovery methodological guide for Mexican local governments<br>(ii) Spatial data analysis (cities vulnerability analysis) and constitution of database<br>(iii) Technical assistance to local governments for long-term urban planning (on-line)   | 70%        | 100 municipalities   |

## Supporting Governments and Community Driven Solutions in various areas

UN-Habitat COVID-19 work in more than 30 countries is ensuring that urban responses improve access to water, hygiene, food, housing, health services and livelihoods, targeting the most vulnerable and high-risk areas. It also includes assistance with data collection, mapping of existing and emerging hot spots to help evidence-based decision making by local governments and key stakeholders. These are some of the examples of work conducted on the ground.

### Informal settlements and slums

Slums are particularly vulnerable because of their overcrowding, lack of access to water, sanitation and formal health services, and their

food insecurity. The classic solutions to the virus outbreak (self-isolation, quarantine, physical distancing, contact tracing, etc.) are very hard to materialize in these settings.

UN-Habitat has worked with partners at several levels, including community organizations. At the same time, numerous guidance notes and technical support tools have focused on increasing awareness and building capacity to respond, minimizing transmission and rebuilding livelihoods for people in slums, informal settlements and vulnerable communities.

<https://unhabitat.org/opinion-slums-are-the-next-front-line-in-the-fight-against-the-coronavirus>

### Various projects in Kenya support Government's efforts to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic

UN-Habitat is carrying out various projects in Kenya to support the efforts to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, with focus on slums and informal settlements.

When reports about the COVID-19 pandemic began appearing, the youth leaders at the Mathare One Stop Centre, which is supported by UN-Habitat, became alarmed at the threat posed by COVID-19 to their community.

The One Stop team realized that the local community, who mostly do not have running water at home, were unable to carry out the simple, protective measure of washing their hands. The group, with the support of UN-Habitat, set up two handwashing stations initially in the Mlango Kubwa community of around 50,000 people, a number that has increased to over 70 in 19 informal settlements across 6 counties, benefiting more than 3 million people.

The youth in Kenya have been praised for their involvement in the response and worked closely with UN-Habitat. Youth groups have also conducted door-to-door education campaigns, explaining the importance of washing hands properly, wearing a facemask, keeping social distance if possible and recognizing symptoms of COVID-19 in time.

Some of the key results of the work conducted in Kenya's informal settlements include:

*"As a Ministry we have elaborate plans to engage the youth and we want the youth to plug in. Thank you partners led by UN-Habitat for showing the way. It's partnership for collective success."*

Joe Mucheru, Innovation and Youth Affairs Cabinet Secretary



Handwashing stations (8 permanent and 65 temporary) established achieving 3.4 million hand washes in six counties significantly contributing to COVID-19 mitigation.



3 Resource Centres and 2 One Stop Youth Centres availed for training of community youth volunteers on COVID-19 mitigation, sensitization and awareness campaigns, and disseminating messages.



176 youth volunteers in 19 informal settlements across 6 counties (Kilifi-42; Kisumu-32; Nairobi-60; Nyeri-12; and Mandera-30) trained



52 youth volunteers doing door to door dissemination of messaging and distribution of related materials.

UUN-Habitat is also carrying out various other projects in Kenya including working with Kenya Association of Waste Recyclers, Nairobi City County, Nairobi Water Company and Dandora community leaders to set up handwashing facilities in Dandora dumpsite and distribute personal protective equipment to informal waste workers.

The agency is also working with the Matatu Welfare Association, and with endorsement of the National Transport and Safety Authority to paint two private minibuses known as matatus with COVID-19 safety and hygiene messages and will use graffiti art on walls in Kibera and Mathare to spread key messages.

In addition, UN-Habitat is working with partners and community volunteers to collect data on the location points of 15 key facilities such as toilets, markets, transport stops, health centres and other facilities connected to COVID-19 transmission, prevention and treatment in 12 informal settlements and slums to enable the authorities and other stakeholders to identify key gaps in response activities.



Community members in Mathare slum, Nairobi, Kenya during COVID-19. @UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn

## UN-Habitat rapid response benefit 300,000 people in informal settlements in Ghana

The current COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on slums and informal settlements in Ghana especially in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana where the poor and most vulnerable live. Overall, only half of all households in Ghana have access to handwashing facilities with water and soap.

UN-Habitat interventions have benefited 300,000 people in the

informal settlements of Gamashie, Amui Djor-Ashaiman and Sabon Zongo. Ten handwashing facilities for communal areas, four large water storage tanks, 185 handwashing facilities inside poor households, 4000 masks, 3720 bottles of sanitiser and 600 large containers of liquid soap have been provided for all three communities. In addition, four standpipes for communal use are being installed in Gamashie. This has created

employment for 50 women who made masks, liquid soap and hand sanitizers. Some 50 youth have been employed as plumbers for the installation of the handwashing stations. In addition, hundreds of youth have found employment with the private organization WEAVE Ghana. The work was supported by UN-Habitat as one of its 13 rapid response projects to COVID-19.



UN-Habitat water provision in Gamashie, Accra, Ghana for COVID-19 response @UN-Habitat/Solomon Tetteh

## Rapid assessment and awareness in informal settlements in Myanmar

UN-Habitat supported a team of community volunteers in five informal settlements in Yangon who have contacted over 13,200 households to provide accurate information about COVID-19.

Information leaflets were shared with communities in Hlaingthayar, Shwepyitha, Dala, South Dagon, and Dagon Seikkan with information about COVID-19 preventive actions

including how to keep your family safe, working or shopping in markets selling fresh meat and fish and how to make a mask at home.

The 61 community volunteers were trained remotely by UN-Habitat and provided with a Personal Protective Equipment kit consisting of masks, full face visors, gloves, and hand sanitizers.

A rapid assessment of informal settlements conducted by UN-Habitat revealed that a third of families could not afford to buy masks to protect themselves and the volunteers also distributed 102,000 masks to the households.

*"We had several meetings on how to manage the project and reach out effectively to the community. I feel that we did not just distribute things, we were able to organize ourselves together to accomplish this."*

Nyein Chan, a community organizer



UN-Habitat community volunteer provides COVID-19 information to Yangon, Myanmar slum resident © Bedar Social Development Group



## Improving access to water and hygiene in informal settlements in Tanzania

UN-Habitat and the European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide 14 dedicated handwashing stations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in informal settlements in the Mwanza region of northern Tanzania. Two thirds of people in the regional capital live in informal settlements and COVID-19 cases are increasing in the area.

The multiple tap handwashing stations will each include a 5,000-litre water tank, wash basins and soap will be placed in public

places, markets and health centres. The new handwashing stations will be managed by trained volunteers from the local community who will provide guidance on effective handwashing.

In collaboration with the Mwanza Urban Water and Sanitation Company (MWAUWASA) the project will install 100 additional water standpipes in vulnerable communities and suspend water disconnections for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic.

The investment is part of the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation project that is supporting large scale investment in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. This is helping local partners to improve water infrastructure for vulnerable people and is supported by UN-Habitat, the European Investment Bank, French Development Agency (AFD), German development bank (KfW) and the European Commission.



New girls toilet block. ©UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu

## Access to Water and Sanitation (WASH)

Globally, it is estimated that around 2 billion people lack access to adequate water. Practicing the most basic of guidelines on COVID-19 can be a difficult task due to lack of access to water and soap.

UN-Habitat has worked with community groups and small businesses in key locations to install a network of public handwashing stations and improve hygiene conditions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### Access to water to vulnerable communities prevents the spread of COVID-19 in Somaliland

UN-Habitat has supplied one million litres of clean water to internally displaced people in two settlements on the outskirts of Hargeisa, Somaliland. The intervention was part of efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is distributing water to over 2000 beneficiaries.

At the outset, vulnerable households in Jimcaale and Ayaha IV IDP settlements who lack bulk water storage facilities were provided with 300 litre containers. Then, over a period of two weeks in July and August, the settlements were each supplied with 500,000 litres was supplied by water tankers.

The activity was part of a European Union funded COVID-19 mitigation intervention under the Hargeisa Urban Water Supply Upgrading Project (HUWSUP) and implemented jointly with Hargeisa Water Agency. UN-Habitat also provided stocks of soap and water to the existing hand washing stations, set up in different strategic locations within the settlements.



Women from the Jimcaale and Ayaha IV IDP settlement listen in during the launch of the COVID-19 mitigation intervention. ©UN-Habitat/Abdiqadir Bedel Dualle

*"We are happy to partner with UN-Habitat in the provision of water to these vulnerable communities, which will ensure improved hygienic measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Somaliland, raise awareness about the pandemic among the urban poor, as well as ensure that they have water for their domestic use."*

Mohamed Daarod, Director of the Hargeisa Water Agency

Hand-free handwashing facilities in key locations and markets prevent spread of COVID-19 in Myanmar

As part of COVID-19 prevention activities, UN-Habitat installed 27 hand-free handwashing facilities in key locations including markets and bus stations in western Myanmar.

UN Habitat’s work in Rakhine State is funded by the Government of Japan and the work was undertaken with the support and co-contribution of communities. UN-Habitat works with community groups, local businesses, and civil society actors in Sittwe Township.

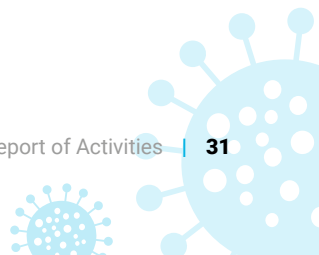
In addition to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, several areas in Sittwe Township are currently facing the early onset of a summer drought which has led to water shortages.

*“The hand washing station near the market is very useful; people who are going back home after buying fish, meat, and vegetables can wash their hands here and be safe from COVID-19.”*

Daw Yin Thein, store owner at Ma Gyi Myaing Market



Myanmar Sittwe market handwashing ©UN-Habitat



## United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund supporting UN-Habitat's Response in Lebanon

Close to 90 per cent of Lebanon's population is urban and it hosts the highest proportion of refugees per capita in the world. There are 1.5 million displaced Syrians in addition to a sizeable community of Palestinian, Iraqi, and Sudanese refugees. UN-Habitat is rolling out a series of COVID-19 projects in some of the most vulnerable urban neighbourhoods in Lebanon to help communities mitigate the effects of the pandemic and the ongoing socio-economic crisis.

As part of its support to the COVID-19 response in the country, UN-Habitat identified Sabra and Daouk-Ghawash neighbourhoods in Beirut, as some of the most vulnerable areas requiring immediate action. The neighbourhoods, which are home to Syrian and Palestinian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, suffer from high rates of overcrowding, unemployment and poverty and many buildings are not connected to the water network.

To address unmet hygiene needs, UN-Habitat, through the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), in partnership with the Popular Aid for Relief and Development provided almost 1,000 families with hygiene protection kits with priority given to the additionally vulnerable, including female-headed households, women, girls, the elderly and people with disabilities. The kits, which will allow 4,500 residents to adopt proper hygiene practises for two months.

*"This is highly appreciated by the residents of this area, who benefitted greatly from these essential hygiene kits, especially due to the current coronavirus situation."*

Aisha Hergel, a social activist



UN-Habitat site inspection for handwashing facilities to prevent COVID-19 in Sabra, Beirut, Lebanon ©UNHabitat

## Mitigating socioeconomic impact

“Collectively, as a global community we need to think how to support local governments to create their own revenue systems, as well as how they access financing mechanisms. Finally, we should think of some sort of a recovery fund that includes local governments so that all levels of governments are able to respond to the challenges we are facing.” Mpho Parks Tau, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of South Africa

UN-Habitat has supported efforts to mitigate local economic impact and design of economic mitigation measures and policies, considering both the formal and informal sector, while preparing for early recovery.

Critical work is being done to ensure alternative income modalities for the most affected groups and direct assistance to severe food insecurity working closely with community leaders (traditional, women, youth, religious among others). These measures have certainly helped to prevent potential increase in domestic and street-level violence.

### In Philippines, Satellite Markets are improving access to food, engaging communities in small business and informing recovery strategies

UN-Habitat has opened two satellite markets and several mobile stores around Marawi City to bring fairly priced food and essential goods closer to people, particularly displaced families. The satellite markets and mobile stores facilitate easy access to food and basic necessities sold at subsidized or wholesale prices. Due to the lockdown and closure of local shops, people travel significant distances to the city centre to find open markets if public transport is available. The satellite market makes products available at fixed locations in

Sagonsongan and Boganga at the edge of the city. The mobile stores travel between remote neighbourhoods and villages to sell food and other essentials. Additionally, the initiative provides capacity development support to the local government to recover from the pandemic.

The project also involves the installation of permanent handwashing facilities and provision of disinfectant supplies in transitional shelter sites and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) among displaced

people living in these sites and among families in host barangays.

The project supports 2,500 internally displaced families living in transitional sites in the barangays (villages) of Sagonsongan and Boganga, as well as other families staying there, local authorities, the COVID-19 Incident Command Centre of Marawi, women and youth, among others. Funds by UN-Habitat Emergency Fund complements existing Japan-funded project, “Rebuilding Marawi through Community-driven Shelter and Livelihood”.



*“The support of UN-Habitat helps augment the Government’s programmes. As in the case of the mobile stores, instead of having people travel to buy food, UN-Habitat through their partner cooperatives will be coming to barangays to make sure people have that access to food and water.”*

TFBM Assistant-Secretary Felix Castro Jr.

UN-Habitat satellite market in Marawi city, Philippines © UN-Habitat/Mark Padida

### Training and capacity building to produce PPE in Nepal

UN-Habitat with its partner SABAH has trained women to prepare material to protect frontline workers against COVID-19 such as face masks, hand sanitizers and protective overall suits which are full length protective gowns.

Using locally available raw materials, workers were quickly trained on making the protective gear and sanitizers. The material, which is in short supply, is being distributed to health staff, municipal workers and others on the front line such as the waste workers in Kathmandu Valley by the municipality.

The home-based workers have prepared more than 5000 masks and 1,000 coverall suits and large amounts of hand sanitizer. UN-Habitat, under the EU-assisted SWITCH Asia programme, is promoting local small and medium sized businesses in Bungamati and creating jobs through SABAH-Nepal.



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

### In Fiji, a foodbank addresses the food shortages resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

In one of the several on-going response initiatives in Fiji, UN-Habitat has handed over food packages to support the Veilomani Food bank.

The Food Bank was started to address the food shortages resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

and has been targeting households in the country's informal settlements. UN-Habitat has been active in supporting the Veilomani Food Bank, an initiative by the Ministry of Housing and Community Development. Households can apply for food support and are vetted to ensure the food packs reach those most in need.



Households receiving food support from the Veilomani Food Bank to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in Fiji on 2 July 2020 © Ministry of Housing and Community Development (MHCD), Republic of Fiji

## Improving access to adequate housing

For the 1.8 billion people around the world living in homelessness and inadequate shelter, an appeal to “stay home” as an act of public health solidarity, is simply not possible. Such a call serves to highlight stark and long-standing inequalities in the housing market. It underscores that the human right to shelter is a life or death matter.

UN-Habitat has focused on crucial measures at global and local levels, such as stopping all evictions, postponing eviction court proceedings, prohibiting utility shut-offs and ensuring renters and mortgage payers do not accrue insurmountable debt during lockdowns. As a result of advocacy efforts, we have seen numerous national and local governments issuing

bans on evictions and instituted moratoriums on payment of mortgages and rents.

UN-Habitat has assisted national and local government in these efforts, including by investigating and devising alternative solutions and mitigating measures for the residents of informal and low-income communities. UN-Habitat has developed tools, measures and guidelines for dealing with situations where relocation has to be carried out as a matter of last resort. UN-Habitat has also developed guidelines for local governments leading inclusive and integrated citywide response planning for COVID-19 mitigation in informal settlements.

### Housing at the forefront of the response to COVID-19 in Myanmar

The right to adequate housing has now become the front-line defence against the COVID-19 outbreak. As the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic are being taken in Myanmar, UN-Habitat urges the Union, state/ region, and local governments, policy makers, national civil society organizations, sister United Nations agencies, International NGOs, and others engaged in efforts to contain COVID-19 to recognize the centrality of housing as a critical infrastructure of healthcare.

UN-Habitat in Myanmar produced a Discussion Paper with assessment and policy recommendations. The paper, which has informed UN-Habitat’s response in the country, recommends four key actions as critical to protect and prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the vulnerable urban poor in Myanmar:

1. Focus attention on informal settlements which are uniquely vulnerable to prevent the spread of COVID-19
2. End homelessness as a public health priority by identifying and allocating shelters for the homeless
3. Ensure that no resident is evicted or displaced by announcing a moratorium on evictions
4. Protect renters and homeowners by instituting an immediate rent freeze and negotiating mortgage holidays



In informal settlements, rent prices form a significant component of the monthly income of families. Unaffordability of rent and the allied threat of eviction will be key concerns for households. 23 January 2020, Myanmar, Yangon. ©UN-Habitat/ Oddy Angelo Barrios

## Spatial Profiling for adaptive responses

Despite the inevitable nature of pandemics such as COVID-19, the health and socio-economic impacts have sent shockwaves through cities and towns globally revealing structural weaknesses in our urban systems. This particular crisis is

unfortunately also aggregating in humanitarian contexts and places such as refugee settlements where systems are particularly fragile; placing huge pressure upon communities who are among those least well-equipped to cope.

### Spatial profiling and planning interventions are informing targeted and coordinated interventions in Kakuma – Kalobeyei

UN-Habitat's work in Kalobeyei and Kakuma in Turkana County, Kenya focuses upon supporting refugees and their hosting communities, aiming to improve access to basic service infrastructure, shelter and socio-economic opportunities through spatial profiling and planning interventions. The spatial profiling methodology utilises rapidly developed analysis leveraging existing information, platforms and partners to reduce transaction costs and improve coordination in the response.

In the context of COVID, this rapidly developed reliable baseline of information to inform targeted and coordinated interventions to combat potential spread of pandemic and guides directed support to vulnerable groups is proving essential. This approach also allows for the incorporation of wider development considerations to guide incremental improvements and particularly reduce the long-term risks faced by displaced populations.

The spatial assessment tool project is funded by European Union Trust Fund and is expressly aligned with both the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan and the Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19.

UN-Habitat on a site visit to visit and review proposed alternative temporary healthcare facilities © UN-Habitat





### Urban planning solutions containing spread of COVID-19 amongst IDPs in Somalia

In a second initiative, in collaboration with the Shelter Cluster, Camp Management and Camp Coordination Cluster (CCCM), UN-Habitat has come up with a framework that provides the overall guidance for the decongestion and upgrading of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) settlements to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Somalia has 2.6 million IDPs who live in more than 2,000 crowded living sites in urban and semi-urban areas with limited access to quality essential healthcare, water and sanitation services. UN Habitat took lead in drafting the decongestion guidelines which was an initiative of the UN Peace Building Fund. A standard operating procedures framework was also developed outlining activity steps that partners should adhere to for successful site decongestion exercises.



Congested Refugee camp in Somalia © UN-Habitat

### Redesigning overcrowded city markets to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Government and UN-Habitat are working together to redesign overcrowded city markets and set up temporary markets to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in four cities.

A team of urban planners from UN-Habitat visited several traditional markets in Addis Ababa, Bair Dar, Hawassa, and Adama. The markets, which sell food, vegetables and other commodities, sometimes even cattle, are still open and very crowded. The planners have proposed new designs incorporating physical distancing, handwashing stations, waste containers

and controlled access to the markets. They also suggested the introduction of temporary markets in certain public spaces. In Fara Gebaya market in Hawassa city, the new relocation site is 8,000 square metres and is designed to accommodate 280 vendors.

The preparation of guidelines and designs to re-arrange open markets is one of UN-Habitat's response to COVID-19 in Ethiopia. In addition, hand washing facilities have been set up at the Koshe dumpsite which covers about 36 hectares to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

City street in Adiss Ababa, Ethiopia © EG Transport Department



## Working with Partners

*"In light of the #COVID19 pandemic, the @UN will work even harder to build a sustainable future. And we need partnerships that go beyond borders so that we can build back better together."*

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations



COVID-19 is a global challenge that must be addressed through international cooperation and partnership. UN-Habitat, in its support countries and cities, has worked side-by-side with the UN system, governments, civil society, academia and private sector, providing guidance, and assistance to support the response work. More than 290 partners have been engaged in different forms at global, national and local levels.

A partners' survey carried out by UN-Habitat in March 2020 highlighted the need for increased engagement of urban actors in the unfolding humanitarian and health crisis, as well as the need to access accurate information on inadequate access to essential basic services necessary to ensure safety and social protection. UN-Habitat has counted on its Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) for guidance and information on a wide range of topics related to COVID-19 response, especially the engagement with stakeholders.

### Delivering as ONE UN

At the global level, UN-Habitat has worked closely with the UN System, both in the humanitarian and development fields. The agency has provided technical expertise to policy and guidance as well as produced new knowledge on the urban dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic. All the key major UN response strategies, policy briefs and plans have a strong understanding of urban issues, how cities are part of the problem and the solution to this pandemic. UN-Habitat had key contribution to that.

In all regions, numerous partnerships and collaborations emerged with UN agencies at country and city levels, many of them involving direct funding and joint resource mobilization. UN-Habitat has put extra effort in the engagement through UNCTs, supporting the review and elaboration of socio-economic analysis of the COVID-19 impact and related response plans.

UN-Habitat is also actively supporting the elaborations of Common Country Analysis (CCAs), and Cooperation Frameworks (CFs) building also on the Secretary-General Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World. This is clearly a strategic entry point to guarantee the mainstreaming of urban issues, which UN-Habitat contributed to at global level, is trickled to all levels of the response and recovery at national and local levels.

### Engaging the Private Sector

Worldwide, the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has introduced new challenges to the business environment, which call for a proactive response from leaders and increased support to foster effective partnerships with the private sector for the COVID-19 response.

#### *Fund to support small and informal enterprises*

On 24-26 June, UN-Habitat organized a Private Sector Forum and through the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) developed a challenge fund to finance COVID-19 response initiatives by small enterprises and informal economies. The fund focuses on 12 countries in Africa with finance support from \$100,000 to 500,000 per initiative. The aim is to draw on the knowledge and networks of community-based enterprises and scale up initiatives. PSUP is also analysing city wide strategies and project pipelines that can be matched with private sector partners.

#### *Rapid Response Help Desk*

UN-Habitat has leveraged its ten years of collaboration with ARCADIS Consultants and, through the Shelter Academy collaboration, has set up a Rapid Response Help Desk to offer instant, rapid technical advice on COVID-19 related issues in the areas of water, buildings and mobility. The Rapid Response Help Desk is designed to support regional offices, country managers and project partners, as well as all head quarter technical staff with technical advice on COVID-19 related issues.

## Community Organizations

Community organizations have had a central role in supporting the most vulnerable people in cities during the pandemic, in particular, youth groups. New communication and tracking tools have emerged as fundamental to the work of community leaders. Using mobile phone apps, they have been able to gather information and assess

the needs of the most vulnerable in order to deliver care packages to residents that required specific support and medication, particularly to the elderly.

UN-Habitat's response has widened collaboration with communities and leveraged community-driven initiatives.

### Youth using art to educate and raise awareness in Kenya

In the informal settlements there is widespread misinformation about COVID-19 and a lack of trust in information coming from the authorities. While many prevention methods such as regular handwashing and physical distancing are challenging, it is hoped that the murals will raise awareness and encourage communities and residents to do what they can to protect themselves and their families.

Young artists in Nairobi's informal settlement Mathare are using their talent to educate residents about how to prevent COVID-19 through brightly coloured murals. A youth group, known as Mathare Roots Youth Initiative, came up with the idea after hearing about similar work in Sierra Leone during the Ebola outbreak.

The youth were inspired during an UN-Habitat training for

youth groups managing hand washing facilities in the informal settlement funded by the agency's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Mathare. The training featured some of the best practices used by young people to raise awareness and pass messages and information to people



*"We decided to put the art about the pandemic in public spaces such as areas close to taps and public toilets. As a result, people are now conscious about hygiene practices such as washing their hands."*

Lucas Odhiambo, a youth leader at Mathare Roots

Murals to raise awareness on COVID-19 prevention created by the community in Kibera slum, one of the biggest informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya as part of UN-Habitat awareness raising project June 2020 © UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu

## Children and youth in Fiji working with community artists to raise awareness on COVID-19

Children and youth in Fiji are working closely with local artists to create community murals raising awareness on COVID-19 prevention. The mural painting is part of UN-Habitat's three month long rapid response support for more than 70 informal settlements to help alleviate the impacts of COVID-19. The project targeting over 9,000 households aims to provide support for water, sanitation and hygiene, isolation facilities and food banks and set up decentralized markets for the urban poor.

The project also promotes behaviour change and awareness raising to improve the knowledge of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention and preparedness. UN-Habitat has developed community outreach guidelines that provide practical tips for informal settlements developed with the Ministry of Health and WHO.

*"This brings out restless children and the youth together to raise awareness and discuss openly issues that affect us all. Whether it's dance, music, visual arts or storytelling, each child can bring to the table his or her own experiences, to share, to engage, to resolve."*

Local artist Lambert Ho



Murals to raise awareness on COVID-19 prevention created by the community in informal settlements in Lami Municipality, just outside Suva, Fiji's capital as part of a UN-Habitat awareness raising project June 2020 © UN-Habitat/Inga Korte

## Urban Data, Mapping and Knowledge

*“The impacts of the crisis will be uneven, particularly in those environments in which inequalities already exist. It is essential to have disaggregated data, to include information on barriers and allow city leaders to improve accessibility.”*

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director UN-Habitat

Data and information provision and coordination among spheres of government is a critical issue to be addressed to guarantee a coherent and sound response to the pandemic, one which meets the needs of all citizens. UN system recently adopted a federated approach to data common backbone of well-structured datasets, common definitions, and compatible data.

UN Habitat has supported the UN System as well as national and local governments, and partners to generate data on cities with several tools and technical expertise. UN-Habitat’s work in data and innovation has focused on three main areas:

- Coordination of the urban federated data systems aligned to the UN Socio Economic Framework on COVID-19
- Repackaging the evidence and data collected to inform action in various cities
- Supporting Member States in generating their urban data systems and platforms

Mapping and spatial analysis – understanding where things happen - is key to inform decision-making and provide responses that are targeted and effective. In this regard, UN-Habitat developed key on-line platforms to assess needs from cities and individuals alike, map response and share knowledge.

### Corporate Data Offering

The corporate data offering is an internal corporate approach to support the provision of urban data in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The corporate data offering focuses on two main areas:

1. Support Member States to generate federated urban data and analysis

2. Inform immediate and longer-term COVID-19 urban response through Urban Profiling

Currently data availability and reporting on COVID-19 spread and impacts is largely at the country level but scarce at the subnational level (e.g. city, settlement subunits). The Corporate Data Offering is an important step towards filling this gap, as well as to harmonising our offering both internally and externally and ensure coherent deployment of UN-Habitat capacity within the ONE UN context and across countries and cities.

UN-Habitat has reached out to several partners and received interest in implementing the first steps in four pilot cities. Corporate data offering will be piloted in 7 countries, collaboration across Data and Knowledge section, Urban Planning and Finance sections and City Resilience Programme.

The Corporate Data approach resulted in regions continuing to use the tools they have developed yet applying corporate principles and the emphasis on spatial assessment, with many synergies between the different models applied in various regions. Mostly important, all regions are supporting cities with profiling and are adopting corporate principles as they do so.

### City-based COVID-19 Readiness and Responsiveness tracker platform

The city-based COVID-19 Readiness and Responsiveness tracker platform is the result of a collaboration with CitilQ. The tracker uses global metrics to provide critical and often unavailable information from cities around the world. The tracker provides information that is critical for protecting populations and informing resilience and recovery strategies and future responses to global pandemics.

The COVID-19 Readiness and Responsiveness tracker for cities offers a unique scoring mechanism that integrates a range of data points to provide a COVID-19 Readiness Score and a COVID-19 Responsiveness Score on a scale of 0-100. The Readiness Score is based on five core indicator areas: public health capacity, societal strength, economic ability, infrastructure, and national collaborative will. Meanwhile the Responsiveness Score is based on: spread response, treatment response, economic response and supply chain response. The input data is normalized to provide comparison between cities.

Data has been processed for 1,198 cities by August 2020. The goal is to cover data from 1,500 cities globally. UN Statistical Division is interested in the platform and provided \$35,000 immediately to assist in further data collection at the city level through the initiative. Local city leaders from various countries (Argentina, Bahrain, etc) have confirmed the usefulness of this platform and requested for adaptation for local applications.

More information: <https://unhabitat.citiiq.com/>

#### **Crowdsourcing data initiative with ESRI**

A COVID-19 Survey was launched in June 2020 using crowdsourcing to collect data from residents of several cities on the impact of COVID-19 in cities across the world. The series of surveys are posted online for two weeks with questions on different topics related to COVID-19 infections, testing, prevention and control measures and its impact on their daily lives.

The crowdsourcing data application has been developed in partnership with ESRI, which provides geospatial information solutions software, and will be used to continuously collect data on the COVID-19 city-specific situations while monitoring measures put in place to control the pandemic and accelerate local recovery.

This initiative provides an opportunity to obtain more insights in rapid COVID-19 related changes in the situation of urban citizen, contributing to more real-time decision-making data for programming and policy formulation and implementation. For example, latest survey results show that 59 per cent of respondents noted a positive improvement

in security in their neighbourhoods following the lockdowns or partial lockdowns. Survey results also showed that, unlike men, women were far more affected by challenges such as paying bills, supporting children and having their pay in the period that followed the lockdowns.

The survey results can be viewed in real-time on the UN-Habitat—ESRI platform available here <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/150e9db59f8b4a9489e86b3523c17ba3>

#### **Other initiatives:**

- **Coordination with UN Agencies:** At the global level, through UN Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities, UN-Habitat contributed to UN system-wide indicators framework for socioeconomic response, to accompany UN socioeconomic framework. UN-Habitat is also engaging with other chief statisticians across the UN system to establish a federative network of data sets on COVID-19 work and a one stop data centre for countries. For example, UN-Women and UN-Habitat partnered to produce a highlight of the plight of women in informal settlements using data available from the two agencies see <https://spark.adobe.com/page/V66OCZMU6Clbc/>
- **Country level profiling and dashboards** on the status of the COVID-19 response based on high frequency indicators. Initial review of existing tools and indicators for Kenya-Nairobi and China-Wuhan: <https://coronavirus-response-guo-un-habitat.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **Compilation of data on vulnerability populations.** UN-Habitat worked on data computations for populations living in slum spaces and modelling movements of urban populations from city to other COVID-19 low risk areas. This data will be made available to local response teams in selected countries. Initial work is being done for Kenya. A GIS platform was developed and made available for the Kenyan response task force. This has evolved into joint development efforts with ESRI Kenya office and a new integrated Africa-wide platform is now available at <https://africas-COVID-19-hub-esri-ea.hub.arcgis.com/>

### Data Application Portal mapping facilities and partners in informal settlements

In Kenya, UN-Habitat contributed to map facilities and partners working in 14 informal settlements. The information has informed the efforts at national level in coordination with the government and the UN country team.

With this data, policy makers are able to selectively identify areas with services or less

services and facilities and target those for prioritization in the provision on vital COVID-related services such as handwashing facilities, schooling facilities, etc which are essential for opening up the lockdowns.

More information: <https://data.unhabitat.org/pages/slum-data-surveys>

### Data is informing the response to COVID-19 in slums in Brazil

In the municipality of Maricá, State of Rio, the team has since the wake of the pandemic been providing reliable and fast information to support the decision-making process of the city in responding to COVID-19. Through its project Chegou a Sua Vez ("It's Your Turn") implemented with the municipality of Maricá through the Darcy Ribeiro Institute, the team in Brazil has located elderly populations with chronic diseases, micro-entrepreneurs, informal workers, and people with no access to basic income to carry out several actions aimed at reducing the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. A minimum wage has for

instance been paid out to informal workers, and 31,000 basic food and hygiene baskets were distributed to each family of students enrolled in the municipal public-school system. The quality information and georeferenced data made available to local authorities have been crucial to identify and inform decisions and make sure no one is left out of distribution channels.

In Maceio, northeast Brazil, UN-Habitat is also producing data and information to support community and local government in the fight against the pandemic in the 'grotas'.



Resident of Grota das Piabas © Maysa Santos da Silva

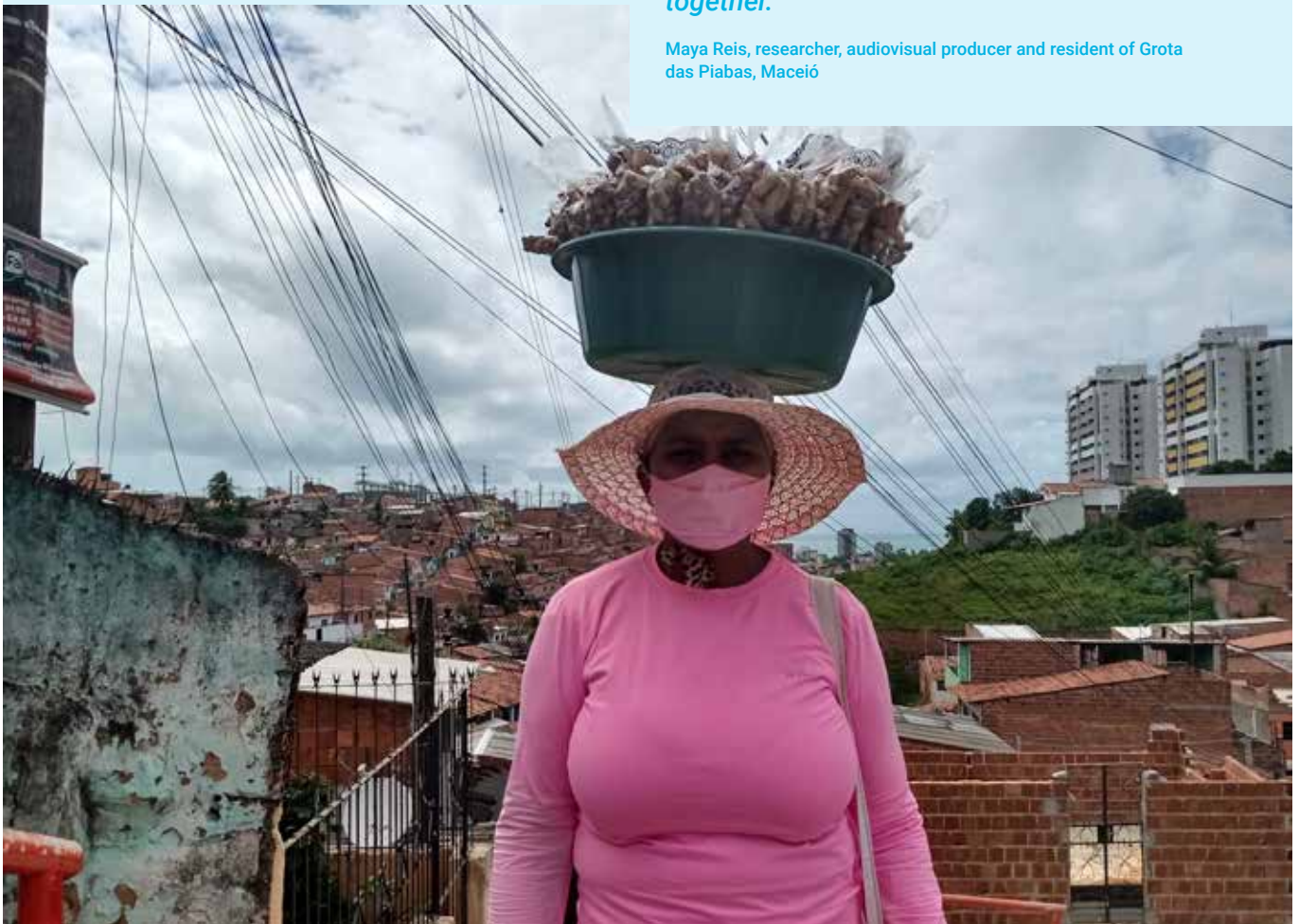
UN-Habitat has gathered statistical information regarding the health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. The results of the first phase highlights vital information: 9% of all dwellers reported to have been tested positive for COVID-19; almost 22% of all dwellers lacked water at least once in the previous month; nearly 50% of households saw their income decrease during the pandemic, but 17.5% improved their income in the same period; 18.5% of households lacked food once in the 15 days preceding the interview. Regarding the people's knowledge on COVID-19, the average score was 6.5 out of 10. The second phase of interviews starts in September and will focus on indicators related to work, employment and income; and education and remote learning.

As part of the project, nine young slum dwellers in Maceió have been recruited to participate in a media content production challenge with the goal

of collectively producing a documentary that will be launched in late October telling the story the pandemic from the perspective of slum dwellers.

*"The project is a very cool and sort of unprecedented experience for these people. It provides new tools for both communication and professional development. I particularly believe in peripheral cinema making with just a cell phone because the most important thing is the content, the narrative. The urban peripheries are rich in stories, wonderful characters, and many talented and creative people. Cinema and the periphery are two things that I truly believe in when they are together."*

Maya Reis, researcher, audiovisual producer and resident of Grota das Piabas, Maceió



Resident of Grota do Ary © Mary Alves



## Mapping best practice COVID-19 solutions in slums and informal settlements

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) in cooperation with the Politecnico di Torino university has established an open source data map to document best practice COVID-19 solutions in slums and informal settlements around the world. The map covers many topics, including communication, water, sanitation, waste management, housing, food supply, health, livelihood, mobility, safety and security, and mapping.

More information: <https://unhab-cov19.usahidi.io/views/map>



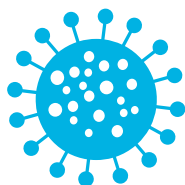
## 5.5 Promoting Active Learning

UN-Habitat turned the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic into a learning opportunity to bring together thousands of experts and partners to discuss challenges, solutions and innovations to overcome the current crisis and build resilience going forward. The webinars involved a wide range of old and new partners including national and local governments, NGOs, community groups, the private sector, academics, media and many more.

One of UN-Habitat's key roles has been to fast-track learning on how cities and communities, particularly in informal settlements and slums, are dealing with the COVID-19 crisis in terms

of preparedness, response and recovery. By facilitating structured learning through webinars and online discussions, the agency supports the exchange and identification of innovative approaches and solutions.

These webinars, which are ongoing, are a key opportunity to bring together local community leaders across cities, countries and regions providing opportunities for active learning about local adaptation, preparedness and response, to look at what works and adjust the response going forward.



### #BeyondTheOutbreak

On 25 March, in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis, UN-Habitat launched #BeyondTheOutbreak, a virtual live learning series for selected mayors, local leaders and stakeholders. The Live Learning Series has brought together more than 3,000 participants over the course of 17 sessions in which 256 speakers from local and regional governments (94 cities from 50

*“Local governments of cities and regions are closest to communities. Their resilience is our strength and source of inspiration. We need to build on this special relationship and I believe that together we can discover the solutions we need.”*

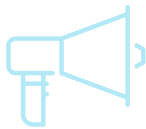
Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director UN-Habitat



countries), the UN system, and partners from civil society shared their experiences, initiatives, and actions to support their communities facing the pandemic through the provision of key basic services.



The sessions focused on key issues such as housing in crisis, mobility and access to technology in service delivery during the current crisis, how cities around the world can overcome challenges with a new generation of solutions, access to technology in service delivery during the current crisis, migration, culture and local economic development. Interventions showcased the indispensable, multiple roles played by local and regional governments, public servants and health officials in ensuring equitable service delivery and ensuring the rights of all are respected during the crisis. Speakers emphasized that the global response to the pandemic must be based on local realities, needs, and solutions. They also shared their frontline views on how cities may transform beyond the outbreak.



The closing of the UCLG Live Learning Experience was held on 10th July during the HLPF. UCLG, Metropolis and UN-Habitat and partners continue reaching out to cities and partners globally to harness the solidarity and political will of those local and regional governments that are on the frontline, pushing more than ever to be the drivers of change, carrying out equitable service delivery, ensuring the preservation of common resources, and promoting human rights in the midst of this crisis.



UCLG and UN-Habitat, together with Metropolis, are joining again forces to provide continuity to the Live Learning Experience #BeyondTheOutbreak with a new series of online meetings called #CitiesAreListening. This new activity is aimed at consolidating and expanding the community of practices built throughout the past months and at particularly exploring how to translate the cutting-edge knowledge into innovative partnerships and concrete initiatives.

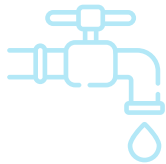


### COVID-19 Urban Thinker Campus Series

Over 3,600 participants joined the COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus Series organized by UN-Habitat to discuss the importance of local communities in addressing the current crisis in informal settlements, recovery and building future resilience. A total of 42 online sessions have engaged a large range of stakeholders including community and grassroot women leaders, social workers, planners, researchers, scientists, business leaders and journalists.



The sessions have allowed a rich dialogue on COVID-19 related challenges from basic services, housing, safety and security to urban planning and design. Participants showcased actions and reflected on key issues facing the pandemic on the ground and preparing for a post-COVID-19 future in cities. A second round of the COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus Series has focused deeper understanding emerging issues to extract recommendations for action. The recommendations on the COVID-19 response are compiled in two reports.



### Webinar series Water Utilities in the Fight Against COVID-19

The world's water and sanitation organizations have come together to share challenges and solutions in webinars organized by the UN-Habitat-led Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA). The webinar series "Water Utilities in the Fight Against COVID-19" has shared solutions and exchanged knowledge about effective COVID-19 Pandemic responses with water and sanitation operators with topics including how to slow the spread in slums and how to effectively manage the crisis through strategy, assessment and decision-making. A total of six sessions have attracted around 150 participants each time.

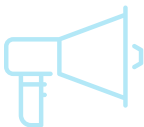
During the discussions, utilities representatives and experts from the water, sanitation and hygiene sector underlined that although the pandemic is slowing in some regions, emergency measures bring about secondary challenges such as a shortage of cash flow which must be addressed sooner rather than later. The 'silver lining' according to participants was that huge numbers of previously unserved people now have access to some kind of basic water and/or sanitation service.

---

### Webinar Urban Rural Linkages in The Time of COVID-19



The UN-Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages project organized the webinar series "Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of COVID-19" starting in May. The aim is to exchange information and learn from the efforts of different actors to overcome this crisis and enhance post-crisis recovery actions by bringing a focus to urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial approaches. The series has addressed issues around migration, food security, social protection and multi-level governance. After the first season of the series, outcomes were documented, and a survey disseminated to inform the 2<sup>nd</sup> season of the webinar.



---

### Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme Learning Events

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) has developed a series of learning events to support local and national governments, implementation partners, community leaders, academia in COVID-19 preparedness, prevention and response. PSUP used the webinars to raise awareness and capacity using the several Guidelines for COVID response developed by UN-Habitat. Three sessions presented lessons learnt and assessed the evolution and impact of COVID-19 response measures across the main topics covered by the guidelines.



---

### Global Urban Lectures

UN-Habitat's most popular video series, the Global Urban Lectures, launched its sixth season on 23 June. With over 170,000 views from 65 countries to date, the series of 15-minute video lectures features renowned experts discussing cutting-edge research and practical recommendations on advancing urban sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals in cities.

The sixth series features 10 lectures providing quick and efficient online learning tools for local government officials, students, academics and other urban professionals at a time when meetings and lectures are cancelled due to the pandemic. UN-Habitat has worked with the support of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and features several videos addressing topics closely related to climate change and urban resilience as well as links with the pandemic. All the videos are available on UN-Habitat's YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxkn7WqOdNdNB3AfG65NQ\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxkn7WqOdNdNB3AfG65NQ_A)



### Other learning initiatives

- *Webinar Series How to continue municipal solid waste management during the COVID-19 pandemic* explored in four sessions, each attracting 60 to 100 participants, the opportunities and challenges of COVID-19 for solid waste management, zooming in on how to adapt the existing systems during the crisis, how waste workers (formal and informal) need to be protected and how to handle the increased amount of medical waste.
- *Webinar Series COVID-19 in Central American Countries* facilitated by UN-Habitat and supporting regional networks in Latin America and Caribbean, in collaboration with MINURVI, SISCA, UNESCAP and a wide range of regional partners.
- *Local2030 Spotlight Series on local responses to COVID-19*, with contribution from UN-Habitat to support partners throughout the globe in responding and recovering from the COVID-19
- *Policy, Legislation and Governance Webinar Series* co-organized by UCLG addressing the governance mechanisms that have functioned in the face of COVID-19 and will be kept for the recovery phase.



UN-Habitat launched 10 handwashing stations in Nairobi's informal settlements of Kibera and Mathare and trained youth attendants from the community to assist with recommended handwashing techniques to protect against COVID-19 7 April 2020 ©UNHabitat/Alfred Ayoro

## Communication and Advocacy

Communication and Advocacy played a key role in ensuring a high level of engagement and interest in the impact of COVID-19 in cities and towns as an urban humanitarian crisis in addition to showcasing UN-Habitat's fast, wide ranging and effective response.

Over a period of 20 weeks, UN-Habitat released about 70 stories from partners along with key messages on social media to raise awareness on the COVID-19 responses in cities and communities. This has helped profile UN-Habitat as a key convener on urban related COVID-19 response.

### **Campaign 'Take action with us in cities and communities'**

To amplify the impact and broaden the reach of the Response Plan, UN-Habitat launched the COVID-19 Campaign: *Take Action with us in Cities and Communities* on 15 April 2020 (<https://unhabitat.org/covid-19>). The Campaign called for civil society organizations, community groups, professional, academic and research institutions, businesses and local authorities to commit to acting in solidarity to fight the pandemic in cities and helping the most vulnerable communities. The Campaign has provided a central place to network and share solutions, initiatives, good practice, lessons and stories from partners and strengthen integrated action to improve the resilience of cities and communities.

More than 100 organizations and 1,500 individuals have joined the Campaign to share their actions, solutions, lessons and stories. These organizations have also organized a series of events to reflect on the crisis and on ways to strengthen the future resilience of cities and communities.

### **Key messages and publications**

UN-Habitat's communication efforts contributed to the success of the Response Plan ensuring it was disseminated in various languages and widely publicised through a Press Release in all UN working languages, on social media and on the corporate website. In support of UN-Habitat's response, numerous key messages were produced, edited and disseminated including on Cities and COVID-19, Housing and COVID-19, Water Sanitation and Hygiene in informal settlements and COVID-19,

Informal settlements and COVID-19, Urban Transport and COVID-19, Gender and COVID-19 and Public Space and COVID-19 as well as for World Humanitarian Day including COVID-19, which then formed the basis for concept notes, speeches and interviews to communicate.

There was a high-level interest in UN-Habitat's original data and Reports which were widely used and quoted. UN-Habitat provided a high degree of visibility for The Secretary-General's Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World and worked closely with UNDP to organize a successful noon briefing for journalists. This was supplemented by key messages, questions and answers and a video message from the Executive Director which led to the Brief being downloaded from UN-Habitat's website alone 500 times.

These are some of the key publications produced or co-produced by UN-Habitat to support COVID-19 response:

1. UN-Habitat COVID-19 Response Plan
2. UN-Habitat Lebanon Unions of Municipalities' COVID-19 Rapid Assessment Report
3. COVID-19 in Africa Cities: Impacts, Responses and Policies
4. Issue Brief: COVID-19 through the Lens of Urban Rural Linkages-Guiding Principles and Framework for Action (URL-GP)
5. Discussion Paper – April 2020: COVID-19: Socioeconomic Impacts on Africa
6. UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World
7. Impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods, food security & nutrition in East Africa - Urban focus
8. Decongestion of IDP settlements
9. UN-Habitat Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space
10. Solid Waste Management Response to COVID-19
11. UN-Habitat and UNICEF Interim technical note on water, sanitation and hygiene for COVID-19 response in slums and informal urban settlements

## UN-Habitat Executive Director in the Media

The role and expertise of the Executive Director role was highlighted by over 10 opinion pieces in various platforms including Foreign Policy, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Devex and Next City and AllAfrica.com. Full use was made of other UN agency and partners' websites such as The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. The ED has carried out interviews with Thomson Reuters Foundation, China Global Television Network, BBC online and various Kenyan outlets.

The opinion pieces also showed UN-Habitat working closely with key actors including from UNDP, the World Bank, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing. This complemented appearances with Mayors and Ministers on platforms such as the Pritzker Forum.

## Website and Social Media

The corporate website has featured over 70 stories on all aspects and locations of UN-Habitat's work with some featured on the UN global site un.org and disseminated by the UN's Department of Global Communications. Website audience have increased steadily to over 30,000 views a week. Close collaboration with UCLG resulted in over 10 joint press releases, also in French and Spanish.

There has been strong engagement with social media, reaching new younger audiences and a fast growth in our LinkedIn and Instagram audiences (currently we are seeing 1,400 new followers a week). UN-Habitat is also working with influencers where possible including promoting a video from the first Regional Goodwill Ambassador for the Arab States.



## 6 | LONGER TERM WORK ON POST-COVID-19

*“Now is our chance to recover better, by building more resilient, inclusive & sustainable cities.”*

Secretary-General of the United Nations



The pandemic has reminded us of the price we pay for weaknesses in health systems, social protections and public services. It has underscored and exacerbated inequalities, above all gender inequity, including stigma and violence against women.

It is the time to redouble our efforts to build more inclusive and sustainable cities and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change and other global challenges. The post-COVID-19 response will require failures to be addressed and all urban residents provided with basic services—especially health care and housing—to ensure everyone can live with dignity

and be prepared for the next global crisis. Local authorities will have to be the driving force in reducing inequality, supported by national government policies that increase the resilience of cities and their residents.

UN-Habitat is fully mobilised and will continue supporting country and city responses, producing knowledge, placing our technical expertise at the world’s disposal, and advocating for building back more resilient, sustainable and inclusive cities. As countries and cities prepare, respond and recover from this pandemic, UN-Habitat will continue engaging and leading global response in the following areas:



Health and development nexus: reviewing and setting standards, manuals, tools in relation to urban determinants, including poverty, inequality and morphology, and impact on the SDGs;



Health, governance and urban finance nexus: reviewing lessons learned, capacity building tools that can inform innovative and resilient recovery strategies;



Understanding the central role of urban planning and infrastructure in the post COVID-19 recovery and

the unique opportunity to start rethinking the way we plan cities;



Understanding long-term implications of pandemics and public health emergencies, for the ongoing work of UN-Habitat;



Socio-economic impacts, the links with urban finance and spatial inequalities;



Investing in basic services, housing and slum upgrading.





**PARTICIPATORY  
URBAN UPGRADING**

**FORMING ACP CITIES,  
LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

 **UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



# Secretary General Policy Brief COVID-19 in an Urban World: Next Steps

The *Secretary General Policy Brief COVID-19 in an Urban World* is a call for further prioritisation and re-alignment of UN-Habitat's work in response to the changing operational context and for new forms of collaboration with other UN entities.

The recommendations and action areas put forward in the Policy Brief can help prioritize UN-Habitat's own engagement with national and

local governments. This should be aligned with UN-Habitat's Policy and Programme Framework for COVID-19 Response, work programme 2021 as well as the opportunity to add value to broader UN efforts and strengthen key strategic partnerships. These are the key areas for follow up and continued action in UN-Habitat's Programmatic Response:

## 1 Support local governments and community driven solutions in informal settlements – including other thematic entry-points in urban areas.

### a) Conduct analysis of solutions gathered by local government platforms

1. Communities of practice to review innovation and scale of solutions within different areas of expertise

### b) Strengthening the capacities of local actors, particularly local governments

1. Promote collaboration across levels of government and subnational jurisdictions, using national urban policies and national urban fora
2. Enhance local government budgetary capacity with policy measures and dedicated funds in stimulus packages
3. Support local governments in avoiding disruptions of essential public services (e.g. water, sanitation, mobility). Adopt policies and strategies that boost capacities for equitable public service delivery and are gender-responsive

## 2 Incremental profiling of urban contexts: urban data, mapping and knowledge for informed decision making.

### a) Commit to periodically updating important data points in the SG Policy Brief and share them publicly

1. Possible data points: % of urban cases to total; impact on slums, informal settlements and deprived urban areas; impact on municipal revenues; increase in evictions; impact on public transport

## 3 Mitigate economic impact and initiate recovery.

### a) Tackling inequalities and development deficits

1. Understand inequalities and commit to disaggregated data gathering and utilisation
2. Contribute to broader advocacy efforts on access to safe shelter and prevention of evictions
3. Develop models for large-scale public investments in affordable and adequate housing programmes and slum upgrading with a focus on water and sanitation and climate mitigation
4. Promote uninterrupted public services for the urban poor and other vulnerable groups, particularly of services that are crucial for effectively coping with the crisis such as water, sanitation, waste collection and electricity

#### b) Pursuing a green, resilient and inclusive economic recovery

1. Promote future-ready cities, ensuring that stimulus packages future-proof cities by focusing on sectors with potential for high ecological transformation and job creation, linked also to strengthening the urban dimensions of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs)
2. Continue to pursue appropriate levels of urban compactness and resist de-densification: Integrate corrective policy measures and incentives that discourage urban sprawl
3. Incorporate concrete urban resilience measures in stimulus plans and scale resilience profiling and multi-hazard resilience plans

## 4

### Promoting active learning on policy measures and practices.

#### a) Review new research and facilitate networking on the urban-health research agenda, in particular:

1. Critical areas in the nexus between urbanization and pandemics that explore new trends and/or require further research and is needed to inform normative tools
2. Disproportionate impact on groups that were already in a situation of greater vulnerability and living in deprived urban areas
3. Relationship between with inadequate housing global urban housing crisis
4. Relationship with density, overcrowding, lack of public space, public transport and air pollution

## 6.2 Global Report on the State of Cities with Pandemics

UN-Habitat's special global report on *The State of World Cities with Pandemics* (provisional Title) will provide Member States and urban development stakeholders an enquiry into the COVID-19 responses from an urban perspective. The report will raise key strategic areas linking sustainable urbanization to the impacts of the pandemic. The Report's thematic analysis will produce new, contextualized evidence on efficient response policies, verified by data, research and COVID-19 case studies from cities.

The report will reveal the sustainable development potentials provided by the challenges of COVID-19 and strengthen the strategic responses towards 'new normal' in cities. Aligning with the UN Secretary-General's call to bring "21st-century solutions" to the COVID-19 crisis, the State of World Cities with Pandemics report is an opportunity for UN-Habitat to anticipate key transformations in cities and advise Member States on urban policies needed to guide all stakeholders through these changes.

#### Themes of the report

The report will help stakeholders prepare for the future by providing analysis on four key themes of sustainable development and pandemics in cities:

- **Urban governance** – How are governance, institutions and systems responding and managing the crisis? What is working well?
- **Urban inequality** – Is the pandemic widening the existing urban spatial, social, and economic inequalities in housing, access to services, human rights and social protection?
- **Urban morphology** – What are the possible transient and long-term shifts in urban forms that can mitigate the future pandemics, increase resilience and reduce the adverse socio-economic impacts?
- **Urban economy** – What are the likely long-term impacts of the pandemic on the urban economy? How will the urban productive sectors, modality of urban work and investment model for cities be affected?

Each theme will be explored using data on the impact of COVID-19 for selected cities and analysing ongoing national and local level responses leading to recommendations for governments on effective policies. The report is expected to add significant value to debates on urban inequality, vulnerability, informality, housing, employment, density, mobility and other issues impacted by COVID-19, and point to the key issues affecting the pandemic risk as well as the enablers of effective urban solutions.

### **Report's strategic importance to UN-Habitat's COVID response**

The State of World Cities with Pandemics Report is expected to provide strong normative and long-term leadership from UN-Habitat to the member States and is an opportunity to scrutinize and adjust previous urban policy guidance and global standards. This would enable UN-Habitat as an organization to take a central position in the vivid global debate on the impacts of COVID-19 on the future way of life in urban areas, concerning more than half of the world's population. The report will also contribute to UN-Habitat's guidance to Member States on how to implement the SG's Report on 'Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19' in urban areas by building resilient cities and cohesive societies together with communities and local governments.





**A better quality of life for all  
in an urbanizing world**

For more information contact: Christine Knudsen  
UN-Habitat Director of External Relations, Strategy,  
Knowledge and Innovation and Director of Emergencies  
[Christine.knudsen@un.org](mailto:Christine.knudsen@un.org)

Regular updates on UN-Habitat's work are available on  
[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

   @UNHABITAT

**UNHABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**COVID-19  
RESPONSE**

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME  
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya  
[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)