

UN-Habitat COVID-19 Response Plan

April 2020

[UN-Habitat/Isaac Muasa]

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

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



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



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



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



2.4 billion people lack adequate access to safe water and sanitation



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

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

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



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



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

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

UN-Habitat is responding to a growing volume of requests from both national and local governments to help them prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on more than 40 years of urban experience, much of it in humanitarian situations, we are focusing on the city-level response to the crisis. We are leveraging our extensive network of partners on the ground, bringing together mayors, governors, transport and utilities providers, urban NGOs, women's and youth groups, and slum-dweller community organizations. And we will bring our catalytic support to help central and local governments, communities and UN agencies to make their work more impactful.

As a centre of excellence on urban issues with a portfolio in more than 60 countries, UN-Habitat's expertise covers a wide range of areas including housing, participatory slum upgrading, youth and gender initiatives,

transport, water and sanitation, research and innovation. We will bring the power of these experts to the service of cities as they meet their specific and varied challenges over the coming months and beyond.

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

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

Health response:

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

Humanitarian response:

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

Socio-economic response:

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

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

Major Action Areas

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

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

- a. Ensuring that public health measures (testing, contact tracing, etc.) are underpinned by action guaranteeing livelihoods and food security.
- b. Facilitating collaboration between local governments, utility providers and community groups to ensure affordable access to water and sanitation for all.
- c. Raising awareness and behaviour change in informal settlements and slums through participation and community ownership of initiatives.
- d. Advocating for measures to reduce the burden of rent and mortgages, provide temporary shelter for the homeless, and repurpose buildings to isolate those infected.
- e. Supporting local governments to manage safe urban mobility and transport, with a focus on those serving communities in informal settlements, while observing any movement restrictions.

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

- a. Generating and integrating community data to shape local responses, map emerging hotspots, reorganize informal markets and transport hubs, plan public spaces and buildings for health and emergency services.
- b. Mobilizing an extensive network of global and local partners to support data collection, mapping and analysis using smart technologies enabling a more targeted response to emerging priority needs including water and sanitation, food, housing, health services and livelihoods.
- c. Fast tracking learning, training and capacity building on how cities and communities are dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, in terms of preparedness, response and recovery.

3 Mitigate economic impact and initiate recovery by:

- a. Designing economic mitigation measures and policies, taking into account the formal and informal sectors, while preparing for early recovery.
- b. Boosting the fiscal capacity of municipalities and local service providers to ensure the availability of essential services.
- c. Helping cities to prioritize actions to improve all dimensions of city prosperity using practical tools such as the City Prosperity Index (CPI).
- d. Building a multi-disciplinary coalition with global thought leaders to develop new insights and knowledge on longer-term policy changes and new ways of working and living.

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



Funding Requirements

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

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

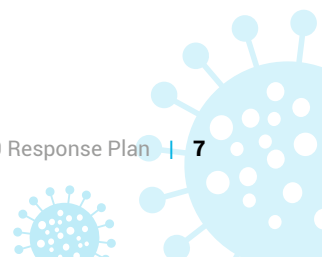
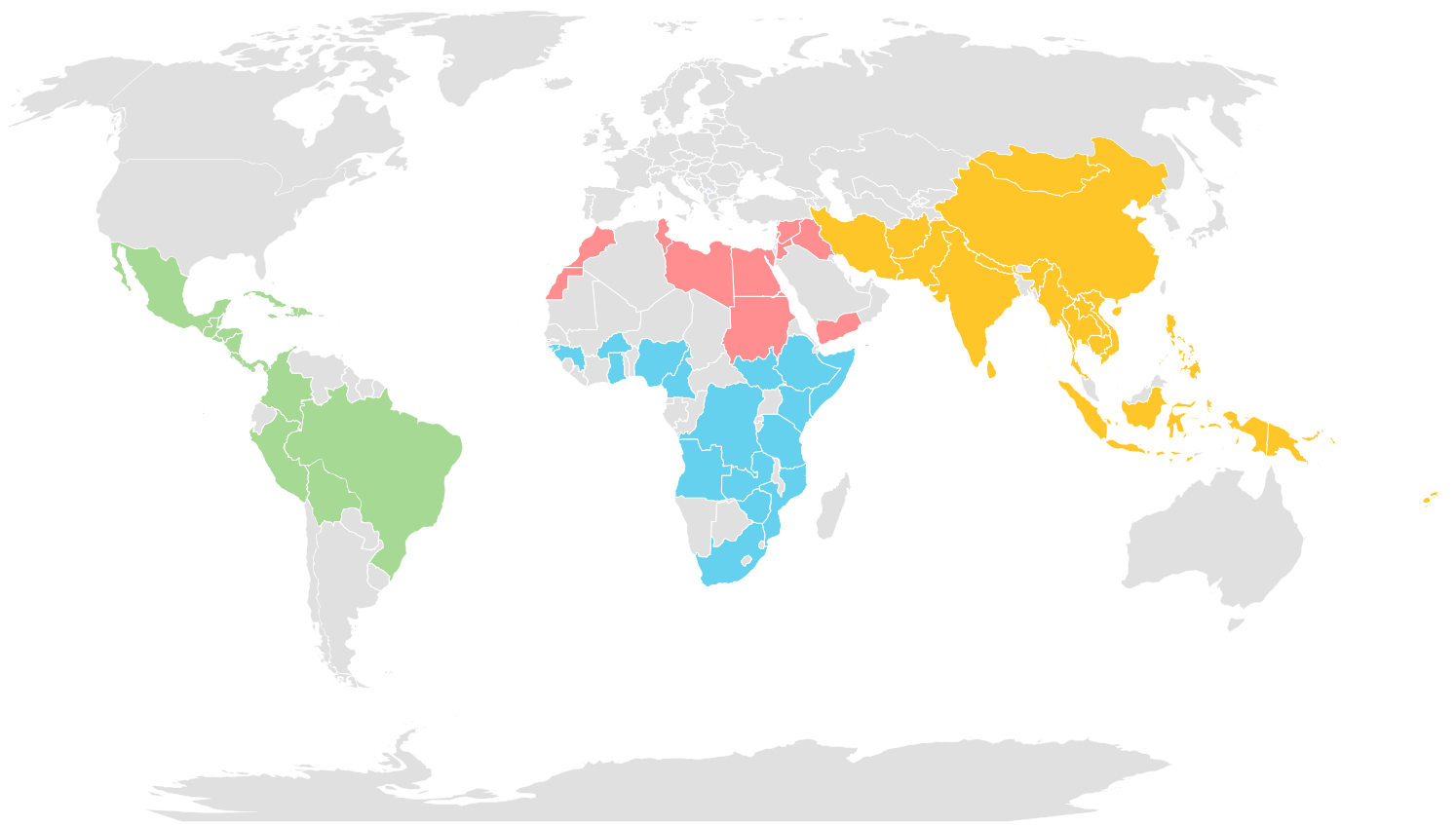


Slum dwellers in Varanasi, India [Eduardo Moreno]

UN-Habitat's Support to Countries and Globally

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

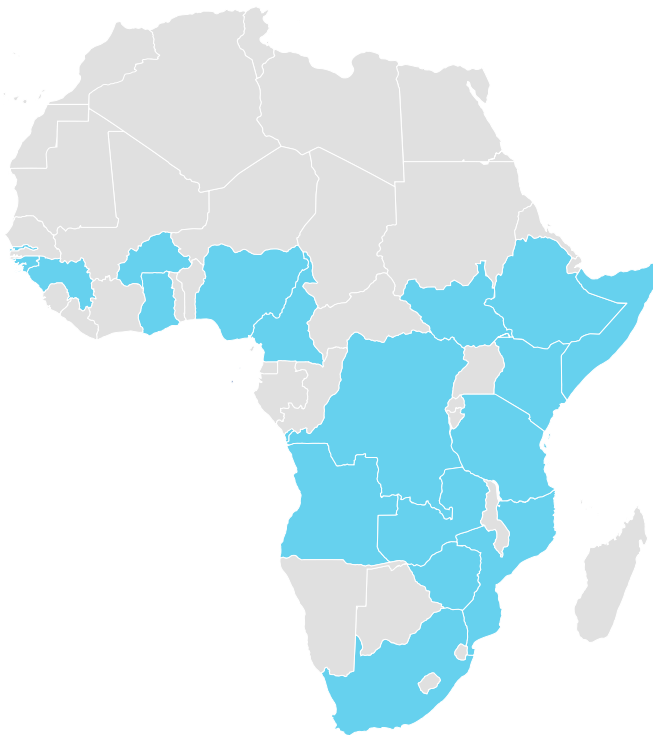
Building on the strength of the #BeyondTheOutbreak virtual live learning series for mayors and local leaders organized with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis, UN-Habitat will provide an online city-to-city virtual learning platform to share innovative and appropriate solutions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





A Participatory Slum Upgrading Project
Area in Old Town in Accra, Ghana
[UNHabitat/Kirsten Milhahn]

Response in Africa



Countries

Angola

Burkina Faso

Cabo Verde

Cameroon

DR Congo

Ethiopia

Gambia

Ghana

Guinea

Guinea-Bissau

Kenya

Mozambique

Nigeria

Sao Tome and Principe

Somalia

South Africa

South Sudan

Tanzania

Zambia

Zimbabwe

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Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest urbanizing region in the world. More than 60% of the urban population live in informal settlements and are now exposed to the risk of COVID-19 as well as the pandemic's social and economic impacts. UN-Habitat's immediate response in Africa prioritizes coordination of emergency preparedness and responses; technical advice and online tools for cities; local leaders and communities; direct programming in informal settlements to improve access to food and basic services including water; sanitation and hygiene and entrepreneurship for local solutions. These actions will be complemented by public awareness-raising through targeted, accurate information in local languages. The recovery phase will focus on providing expert policy advice, knowledge sharing and urban recovery programmes to improve services and infrastructure in informal settlements and to sustain the gains made.

- In Kenya, UN-Habitat is supporting the Government's effort to collect data and improve access to water and sanitation facilities in informal settlements, and to prevent COVID-19 spreading through urban transport systems. We are working with civil society and community organizations to ensure integrated coordinated responses.

- In Ethiopia, UN-Habitat helping to supply water to waster pickers in the capital Addis Ababa who are at risk of infection. We are also conducting rapid mapping of community assets, spaces and vulnerable hotspots to allow appropriate responses such as providing water and sanitation, waste management and using public spaces near informal settlements to isolate people with COVID-19.
- In Somalia, the immediate response involves providing medical supplies and personal protection equipment to front line health workers, supporting the Mogadishu local authority response strategy with plans to help communities improve water, sanitation and hygiene, and mitigate the economic impact on the most vulnerable.



Beirut, Lebanon
[Eduardo Moreno]

Response in Arab States



Countries

Egypt

Iraq

Jordan

Lebanon

Libya

Morocco

Palestine

Sudan

Syria

Tunisia

Yemen

Current projections show a drastic economic decline in the region due to COVID-19 resulting in an additional **8.3** million people living in poverty

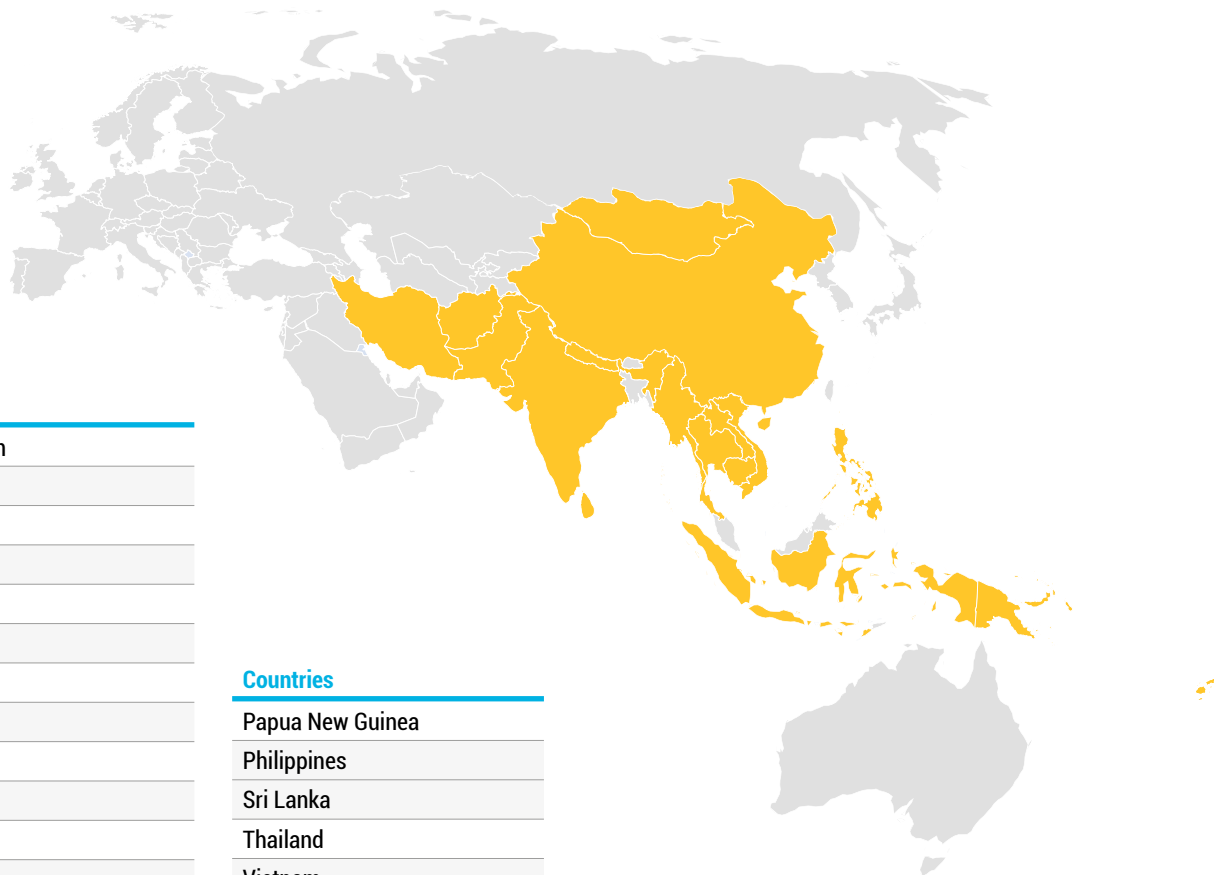
The Arab region hosts around 12 million refugees and internally displaced persons, and some 81 million people live in informal settlements. All are at great risk from COVID-19 and its effects within their communities. Current projections show a drastic economic decline in the region due to COVID-19 resulting in an additional 8.3 million people living in poverty. The immediate response focuses on vulnerability assessments in cities and neighbourhoods; online mapping of risk areas; providing information for municipalities and communities; city learning; improving water, sanitation, and hygiene; ensuring safe mobility and transport, supporting initiatives helping the urban poor keep their homes even with plummeting incomes and securing livelihoods and alternative means of income during periods of restricted movement. In the medium term, the response will focus on improving water, sanitation services and infrastructure, transportation plans, supporting communities that have lost livelihoods, shelters, and building the capacity of municipalities and communities for integrated health actions. Future planning will be informed by evaluations of impact, risk factors and effectiveness of actions.

- In Iraq, UN-Habitat is reorienting its existing activities to carry out COVID-19 responses focusing on water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter improvements for the most vulnerable, job creation and public messaging. Working with UN partners, we contribute to an online platform that provides government endorsed information on COVID-19.
- In Tunisia UN-Habitat is supporting the development of a *Leave No One Behind* mobile app to provide a one-stop-shop information portal on COVID-19 to allow vulnerable communities to easily access essential services provided by the State, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations.
- In Egypt, UN-Habitat is using riverbank filtration technology which is easy to operate and maintain to extend affordable access to clean water and sanitation to vulnerable communities at high risk of infection.



Customers have their temperatures taken before entering a shop in Marawi City, the Philippines [Abdul Jalil B. Madid]

Response in Asia Pacific



Countries

Afghanistan

Cambodia

China

Fiji

India

Indonesia

Iran

Laos PDR

Mongolia

Myanmar

Nepal

Pakistan

Countries

Papua New Guinea

Philippines

Sri Lanka

Thailand

Vietnam

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the fastest urbanizing regions and is home to a large concentration of urban poverty with one third of urban dwellers in slums or slum-like conditions. Nearly one billion people do not have access to proper hygiene, water, sanitation or health facilities.

Working with partners, communities and other UN agencies, UN-Habitat will support evidence-based government and humanitarian responses by collating, analysing and producing urban spatial data to inform COVID-19-related actions in urban areas including vulnerable settlements and communities. There will also be area-based programming for an integrated response and to raise public awareness to foster behaviour change. Essential services such as hygiene, water, sanitation and health facilities will be improved, and innovative technology used.

- In Cambodia, UN-Habitat is supporting the installation of latrines in communities, training on handwashing, physical distancing, wearing of masks and behaviour change in communities through messages in print and on social media.
- In Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat is supporting provincial councils and local authorities to establish a service provision database, facilitating online discussions with local authorities on their emergency response and training them on online reporting of services they provide. Discussions are ongoing on launching a risk communication campaign for communities in the tea plantations.
- In Myanmar, UN-Habitat is installing public handwashing stations in key locations such as Sittwe in Rakhine State by working with community groups and small businesses and distributing education and communication materials.



An informal settlement on the Picacho hill in Medellín, Colombia
[UN-Habitat/A.Padrós]

Response in Latin America and the Caribbean



In Latin America and the Caribbean, COVID-19 challenges include unequal access to health services along with the severe economic impact due to the decline in trade, manufacturing and tourism resulting in higher unemployment and lower wages. There is a risk of greater inequality, an increase in poverty and higher levels of informal employment in a region where over half of the workforce is already in the informal sector. UN-Habitat will help to build the capacity of local authorities to respond to the crisis, particularly in informal settlements, mitigate the economic impact on the urban poor and take part in the wider regional integrated efforts to bring investments to vulnerable areas such as informal settlements and foster the recovery after pandemic.

Countries

Belize

Bolivia

Brazil

Colombia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Dominican Republic

El Salvador

Guatemala

Haiti

Honduras

Jamaica

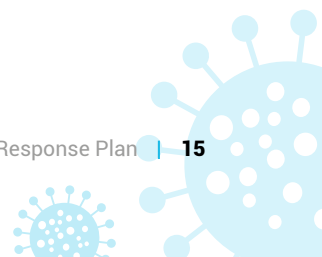
Mexico

Nicaragua

Panama

Peru

- In Central America, UN-Habitat is supporting eight countries through SISCA (Central American Social Integration System) to support the implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures contributing to strengthening long term socio-economic and health resilience of informal settlements communities.
- UN-Habitat plans to scale up interventions in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador through integrated/blended short-term investments in informal settlements.



A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world

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Regular updates on UN-Habitat's work are available on
www.unhabitat.org

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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