WHO And UNICEF To Partner On Pandemic Response Through COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

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The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF today announced an agreement to work together on COVID-19 response, through the historic COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund powered by the United Nations Foundation and Swiss Philanthropy Foundation.

The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund has been set up to facilitate an unprecedented global response by supporting the World Health Organization's (WHO) Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. As part of the agreement, an initial portion of the money from the Fund – which currently stands at more than $127 million – will flow to UNICEF for its work with vulnerable children and communities all over the world.

"COVID-19 is an unprecedented pandemic requiring extraordinary global solidarity to urgently respond," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. "I'm pleased that UNICEF joined the Solidarity Response Fund. With their extensive experience both in fundraising and in implementing programs, this partnership will help us to work together closely to save lives."

The money collected through the fund will be used, among others, to train and equip communities and health-care workers to prevent, detect and treat COVID-19. It will help countries expand their health-care capacity and mitigate its social impact, especially on women, children and vulnerable social groups. And it will accelerate research and development of treatments and preventive vaccines.

As a key partner in this joined-up effort, UNICEF will lead emergency efforts to ensure families and communities in the most vulnerable countries are fully engaged in the response and have access to water, sanitation and hygiene and other infection prevention and control measures. UNICEF will also ensure children, caretakers, and frontline responders such as social workers, teachers and healthcare workers are supported through evidence-based guidance through its vast community outreach and country programs.

"This is an extraordinary emergency that demands an extraordinary response, and we need all hands on deck—individuals, corporations, foundations, governments and other organizations around the world," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. "UNICEF is pleased to join the Solidarity Response Fund. It will bolster our efforts to strengthen health and sanitation systems and help protect the most vulnerable families from knock-on impacts of COVID-19 on already overstretched health systems."

Funds raised will be spent in alignment with the global response plan, and where needs are greatest. At the direction of WHO leadership, it is expected that resources will go directly toward:

- **WHO,** for its work to track the spread of the virus, assess gaps and needs, equip frontline health workers with personal protective equipment, ensure lab and testing tools are available in countries around the world, and keep communities and frontline responders informed with the latest technical guidance.

- **UNICEF**, to ensure children and families around the world are equipped with all the evidence-based information and latest WHO guidance as well as locally relevant information to protect themselves from the spread of COVID-19; to support vulnerable countries by providing access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and basic infection prevention and control measures; and to provide access to care for vulnerable families and children.

- **CEPI**, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, a key partner leading the financing for research and development for novel vaccines to combat COVID-19, working closely with WHO.

The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund was set up at WHO's request by the UN Foundation and Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and launched three weeks ago. It is the only way for individuals and organizations to contribute directly to WHO's global efforts to tackle the pandemic. To date the fund has $127 million raised or committed from more than 219,000 individuals from all over the world plus more than 90 global companies and organizations. The partnership is also a tremendous demonstration of solidarity across UN organizations in coordinating, partnering and supporting each other in dealing with the immediate and longer-term impact of the pandemic.

“There has never been a more urgent need for global cooperation,” said Elizabeth Cousens, President & CEO of the UN Foundation. “The COVID-19 pandemic shows us that we all can play a part to stop the spread. The incredible generosity shown to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund from around the world will help WHO, UNICEF, CEPI and partners accelerate their lifesaving work, especially to support the most vulnerable communities and speed the development of a vaccine.”

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About UNICEF
The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.

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