UN Emergency Appeal

A Response To COVID-19 and Its Impacts in Uganda

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES CALL FOR UNPRECEDENTED MEASURES

The global COVID-19 pandemic is a health emergency like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic is only surpassed by the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic in its scale and level of destruction. The highly contagious disease has spread to over 185 countries worldwide and on March 22, it officially crossed Ugandan borders. Both the effects of the disease and the measures to curb its spread will affect the lives of 42 million Ugandans—35 percent of whom live below the poverty line—and will have an adverse domino effect on the already strained resources of this developing nation. Measures to keep people safe from the virus’ spread have disrupted the livelihoods of the millions of farmers whose produce fuels East Africa’s 4th largest economy and the urban merchants who sell goods on the local market. The precarious safety and protection of poorer women and girls now teeters on edge as these vulnerable segments of the population are likely at greater risk of abuse and exploitation, in addition to being forced to resort to poor coping measures such as early marriage and prostitution just to survive. The 1.4 million men, women and children who have survived treacherous journeys to seek refuge in Uganda are put at greater risk of contracting the disease due to their cramped living conditions in refugee settlements and their poor access to essential services such as primary healthcare, education and adequate sanitation.

These unprecedented times must be met with unprecedented measures—measures that require innovation, creativity and copious amounts of local, national and international effort to save the lives of millions across Uganda. To that end, the United Nations in Uganda, local and international NGOs and the Ugandan civil society community have come together for the first time in over 20 years to call on the international private and public sectors to assist the Government of Uganda in saving millions of lives and preventing the spread of COVID-19.
**PRIORITY 1  KEEPING UGANDA HEALTHY**

**6.8M \ People in need  2.5M \ People targeted**

**Why Health:** With precious financial and human resources diverted to fight COVID-19, focus will likely shift from other dangerous communicable and chronic diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV, much to the detriment of the Ugandan population. Also, serious consequences for women and girls may arise if important medical services around sexual and reproductive health go neglected.

**How we will do it:** Identify and promote digital innovations addressing public health challenges due to COVID-19; engage adolescents and youth on sexual and reproductive health rights using media and community leadership; provide counselling support to people affected by virus as well as to health workers fighting the pandemic, identify those at high risk of contracted COVID-19, and conduct two periodic intensified routine immunization campaigns in the worst-affected COVID-19 areas.

**Who’s involved:** WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNDP, CUAMM, IOM, CRS, Save the Children

**How much will it cost \ US$71.2M**

**Fulfilling SDGs:**
### PRIORITY 2  FEEDING AND NOURISHING UGANDA

**3.8M** **People in need**  **3.8M** **People targeted**

**Why Food Security Nutrition & Livelihoods:**
As with many countries around the world, to contain the spread of COVID-19, the government has issued lockdown orders to all people residing in Uganda. As a result, many businesses have had to partially or fully shut down. Restriction to movement has caused farmers to stop agricultural activities which has caused the price of food and goods on the local market to rise sharply. 1.2 million refugees, who already had to endure a 30 percent cut to their food rations due to a funding shortage, will not have the adequate nutrition to keep their immune systems healthy to stave off the virus.

**How we will do it:** Create public and private community food banks and government-regulated market control regulations to avoid inflation of food prices; coordinate food assistance for people in isolation due to COVID-19; support the government in successfully carrying out the world’s largest urban food distribution; create alternate methods for school feeding for vulnerable families whose children are out of school due to COVID-19 safety measures; conduct assessments of local market and build capacity of retailers.

**Who’s involved:** WFP, CRS, IST, FAO, UNICEF

**Fulfilling SDGs:**

### PRIORITY 3  SAVING LIVES AND PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES

**8.9M** **People in need**  **5.8M** **People targeted**

**Why Life-Saving Services & Social Protection:**
COVID-19’s effects on the population are not only related to health. Its ripple effects are felt on the job market as well. Many Ugandans, including 86 percent of women, work in informal sector jobs such as street vending and can no longer travel or work in areas they used to due to the government-mandated lockdown. The measures are particularly worrisome for the elderly, the disabled, as well as female and child-headed families. These populations often do not have access to banking services and do not have savings to fall back on. COVID-19 prevention measures will also backlog the criminal justice system as those awaiting bail or trial as they will face delays. Staff and occupants of prisons and jails that have already tripled their capacity, are exposed to greater risk of contracting the disease.

**How are we going to do it:** Target vulnerable/affected women, especially the urban and rural poor, through cash transfers, distribution of agricultural equipment and grants for micro- and small-enterprises led by women; support women peacebuilders to carry out advocacy and awareness on peaceful co-existence during the time of confinement and advocate for peace and security in the COVID-19 response; support the release of prisoners who have completed their sentences.

**Who’s involved:** UN Women, WFP, IOM, FIDA, UWONET, OHCHR, UNODC, UNFPA, Youth Sustainable Development Goals, Tunaweza Foundation, TPO Uganda, UNICEF, Save the Children, Water Aid Uganda, Life Water International, Child Fund Uganda, Uganda Red Cross, World Vision, YINET

**Fulfilling SDGs:**
**PRIORITY 4  PEOPLE SEEKING REFUGE AND THOSE WHO ARE DISPLACED**

1.4M \ People in need  
1.4M \ People targeted  

**Why Refugees & Displacement:** Uganda has had an over 60-year history of welcoming people seeking refuge from conflict in neighbouring nations. Its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) is considered one of the most progressive refugee policies on the planet. However, COVID-19 is threat to the relatively peaceful existence of refugees in Uganda. Funding for refugee responses across the region have dwindled and focus on national COVID-19 responses worldwide will likely hurt efforts to maintain what meagre resources remain to feed, clothe, shelter, educate and protect the 1.4 million refugees in Uganda. It is also important that changes in weather patterns and natural disasters that have forced Ugandans to flee their homes do not exacerbate the spread of the virus due to crowding in makeshift shelters.

**Who’s involved:**  

**Refugees:** CRS, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, Save the Children, UNHCR, Danish Refugee Council, War Child Holland, Humanity & Inclusion, UN Women, FAO, UNCDF, World Vision  

**Displacement:** IOM, Uganda Red Cross, UNDP

**How much will it cost:** US$80M

**How we will do it:** Subsidize teachers' salaries and implement distance learning alternatives for refugee students during lockdown; scale up cash distribution and revise food and cash assistance to incorporate COVID-19 safety measures; provide short-term micro-grants to distressed farmers for agribusiness; advocate to local government for tax forgiveness to COVID-19-affected businesses serving refugees; provide support to case workers and community workers on issues related to child rights and safety around COVID-19; community engagement and awareness-building on COVID-19 in refugee settlements specifically targeting women and the disabled and maintaining and upgrading water/sanitation systems as well as purchasing household items and shelter materials for refugees; construction of adequate shelters, latrines and handwashing facilities in homes and schools in districts prone to landslides; support tree planting and the creation of disaster preparedness plans for disaster prone districts.

**Fulfilling SDGs:**

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**PRIORITY 5  SUPPORTING ECONOMIES AND INNOVATION**

4.8M \ People in need  
4.8K \ People targeted  

**Why Economic Recovery & Digital Innovation** Uganda has one of the largest economies in the region—supplying food and goods to several countries in East Africa. The spread of COVID-19 threatens to bring this thriving economy to its knees. Activities are needed to help stem the effects of the disease on the Ugandan economy and help the government recover the economy once the disease is eradicated.

**Who’s involved:** UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO

**How much will it cost:** US$14.7M

**How we will do it:** Ensuring e-payment platforms for payment utilities; using digitization to collect, analyse and disseminate data for the purpose of decision-making and understanding population movement; using digital platforms to collect feedback from public; mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19 on economy, particularly on small and media enterprises (SMEs), by supporting the adjustment of business processes to sustain their operation through the lockdown and beyond; providing SMEs with tools and skills to conduct business using available digital solutions/platforms.

**Fulfilling SDGs:**
**PRIORITY 6  COORDINATING THE RESPONSE AND ENGAGING UGANDAN COMMUNITIES**

*Why Coordination, Community Engagement & Common Services:* To ensure that this historic collaboration between the UN, NGOs and CSOs to tackle COVID-19 works smoothly, investment in coordination is key. Coordination to ensure that messages between all responding agencies is uniform. Coordination in speaking to and engaging local communities is effective and coordinating the free and unhindered movement of humanitarian agencies tasked with saving the lives of people affected directly and indirectly by the virus.

*How are we going to do it:* Coordinate the transition of agencies from emergency/humanitarian relief activities to longer-term/development interventions; help humanitarian agencies to move freely throughout the country to deliver life-saving assistance; deliver common messages on COVID-19 prevention and awareness to all segments of the population through all traditional and social media platforms at the local, national and international level.

**Who’s involved:** YINET, Farm Radio International, Pulse Lab Kampala, UNDSS, Smart Youth Network Initiative, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNRCO

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**UGANDA AT A GLANCE**

- **43,000,000**
  - Uganda’s total population

- **13,000,000**
  - Vulnerable people in Uganda

- **12,800,000**
  - People targeted in UN Appeal

- **86%**
  - Of women in the informal sector

- **1,400,000**
  - Refugees in Uganda

- **12,800,000**
  - People targeted in UN Appeal

- **139,000**
  - Children with severe acute malnutrition

- **6,000,000**
  - Urban poor in need of assistance due to COVID-19

- **56%**
  - Of women who experienced GBV pre-COVID 19

- **91%**
  - Of youth in the informal sector

- **33%**
  - Primary school-aged children out of school

- **70%**
  - Secondary school-aged children out of school

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April 2020