

Urgent funding needed to address the COVID-19 outbreak and humanitarian needs of 7.4 million people in South Sudan

(Juba, 16 June 2020) The Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan, Alain Noudéhou, today launched an urgent funding appeal to support the COVID-19 response and respond to new humanitarian needs. The COVID-19 Addendum to the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan requests US\$390 million and brings the overall humanitarian appeal for the year to \$1.9 billion. The National COVID-19 Response Plan, which request \$150 million, is included in this Addendum. Humanitarian organizations aim to assist 7.4 million people by the end of the year, up from the 5.6 million planned before the outbreak.

“The humanitarian community in South Sudan is committed to stay the course and deliver much-needed essential services and assistance for the most vulnerable, including older people, people with disabilities, and women and girls, as well as those who have been newly hit, such as the urban poor,” Noudéhou said. Since COVID-19 was confirmed in South Sudan in April 2020, humanitarian organizations working alongside the Government and development partners and with support from donors have supported the National COVID-19 Response Plan with emphasis on prevention and mitigation. At the same time, he added: “The pre-COVID-19 humanitarian operations must continue while we address new needs created by the virus, to avoid life-threatening consequences for people already facing serious risks including renewed conflict, hunger and other more preventable diseases.”

The global COVID-19 pandemic is affecting countries around the world and is now spreading rapidly in South Sudan, with 1,776 cases confirmed as of 15 June. It is already having a significant negative impact on the humanitarian situation and any socio-economic and political progress the country has made over the past few years. Humanitarian organizations are working to respond to the outbreak and prevent its spread to new areas, Key achievements to date include 4 million people reached with risk communications about the virus; 3.2 million people reached with advanced food rations ahead of the lockdown and travel restrictions; over 300,000 internally displaced people reached with COVID-19 preventive messaging in Protection of Civilians sites and camp-like settings; and 265 health facilities supported with infection prevention and control supplies.

The collective response to the COVID-19 crisis will only be effective if organizations are able to operate in a safe environment. “South Sudan is currently experiencing an increasing level of intercommunal violence and continuation of armed conflict in parts of the country. This is killing hundreds, displacing tens of thousands and hampering delivery of assistance. We need to see urgent political progress to increase stability and security at all levels to protect civilians and humanitarian workers; to ensure predictable access; to enable delivery of humanitarian and health assistance; and to facilitate socio-economic recovery,” Noudéhou stressed.

He also called for the continued support of long-standing donors and the commitment of new partners for timely and flexible funding and concluded: “We must come together for a coordinated effort that engages the whole South Sudanese society and international partners, and that prioritizes prevention above all.”

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OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org/south-sudan or www.reliefweb.int.

Note to editors

During the first quarter of 2020, and before the arrival of COVID-19 in South Sudan, about 3.5 million people were reached with assistance through the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, thanks to the dedication of thousands of national and international humanitarian workers, and the generosity of donors. Of the \$1.9 billion appeal for 2020, some \$500 million of funding have been received as of 15 June, according to <https://fts.unocha.org>.

Key achievements by the UN and NGOs in support of the national response include

- 4 million people reached with risk communications about the virus
- 3.2 million people reached with advanced food rations ahead of the lockdown and travel restrictions
- 300,000 internally displaced people reached with COVID-19 preventive messaging in Protection of Civilians sites and camp-like settings
- 265 health facilities supported with infection prevention and control supplies
- 132 beds made available for admission of severe and critical COVID-19 patients
- 350,000 refugees and host community members have received soap on a monthly basis
- Eight weekly radio shows held on COVID-19 related protection and human rights issues
- Two national helplines established to provide remote support and facilitate referrals for gender-based violence survivors during COVID-19

Priorities for the COVID-19 Addendum to the Humanitarian Response Plan include

- Containing and preventing outbreaks in displacement and refugee sites, and ensuring that correct response measures related to case management are in place to limit the spread of the virus
- Maintaining routine health facility and community-based health care services while focusing on the COVID-19 response
- Increasing handwashing stations and targeting public places like markets and schools (for reopening) to prevent the spread of the virus
- Providing emergency food assistance complemented by livelihood and livestock support to COVID-19 affected people
- Ensuring quality learning for out-of-school children as a result of school closures due to implementation of COVID-19 risk mitigation measures
- Providing logistical capacity to enhance access to people by transporting humanitarian personnel in compliance with national regulations on internal movements
- Addressing protection issues particularly for vulnerable women and girls that are anticipated to multiply, exposing them to GBV and other grave rights violations beyond COVID-19

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

See the COVID-19 Addendum to the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan here: <https://bit.ly/3e7Qiq7>

See the COVID-19 Addendum at-a-glance infographic here: <https://bit.ly/3fycsSD>

Read more about the humanitarian situation and response here: southsudan.humanitarianresponse.info

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