



for every child



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# CORONAVIRUS:

## CURRENT SITUATION AND UNICEF'S RESPONSE

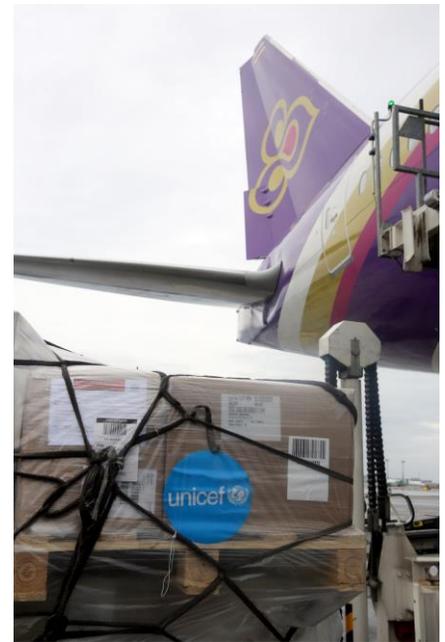
FEBRUARY 2020

## Situation Overview

**According to the World Health Organization, the novel coronavirus is officially a public health emergency of international concern.** UNICEF is working with partners to help protect children and halt the virus now.

Starting in early 2019, there are now more than 20,400 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and over 23,200 suspected cases have been reported in Mainland China moving outwards from Wuhan City, Hubei, across the country and now affecting Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. **Outside of China, confirmed or suspected cases have been reported in 23 countries with active tracking provided by WHO - the World Health Organization**

The nCoV is a respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus. Previous nCoVs include SARS and MERS. The impact of a large-scale outbreak on children, especially poor and vulnerable children, can be immense— through disruption to education and health services, impacts on caregivers, and separation from family members. 2019 n-CoV prevention and response efforts must include measures to mitigate these impacts on children. The outbreak has also caused a wave of misinformation on the virus, complicating efforts to manage prevention efforts. The WHO has announced battling this ‘infodemic’ as a critical task.



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## UNICEF in Action

On January 29, 2020, the first UNICEF protective equipment supplies were unloaded upon arrival from Denmark at Pudong International Airport in Shanghai in China. UNICEF has been working closely with Government authorities and WHO since the onset of the outbreak. The first supplies were delivered weighing nearly six tons and including 97,221 masks and 10,861 protective suits for health workers in Wuhan. Following those supplies, 7,000 protective goggles, 90,000 masks, and 1.2 million disposable gloves were delivered for use by health facilities, and there are thousands more goggles, protective suits and surgical gowns and gloves in the pipeline.

**Currently, UNICEF is focusing on scaling up the rapid public information needed to help protect especially pregnant women and children from both exposure to the virus – but more importantly – the disruption to their regular health services which are so critical at these points in life.** So far, UNICEF has focused its public health messaging on prevention through social media with information on how to prevent infection of 2019-nCoV, how to wash hands regularly and adequately. A poster on the six-steps of handwashing developed by UNICEF China and the China Center for Disease Control (CDC) was shared and promoted by our UNICEF China ambassador Roy Wang who retweeted the message on January 29th, helping it reach more than 20 million people in a few short days. The first advice to pregnant women was tweeted by UNICEF and promoted by UNICEF China ambassador Ma Yili on reaching more than 2.6 million people.

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*“This coronavirus is spreading at a breakneck speed and it is important to put all the necessary resources into halting it,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “We may not know enough about the virus’s impact on children or how many may be affected – but we do know that close monitoring and prevention are key. Time is not on our side.”*

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# The Way Forward

UNICEF is urgently scaling up its reach across the surrounding countries as well as extending messaging across the East Asia Pacific region. Some of the countries most exposed through travel and other links have varying capacity to manage public health risks. UNICEF's aim is to prevent this outbreak from spreading, reducing the numbers of those affected and avoiding the knock-on public, social and economic impacts that disproportionately affect children. To achieve this, UNICEF is developing messaging to help keep families safe and equipped with accurate information on the risks, as well as shielded from misinformation which may make them fearful of accessing medical health for non-virus-related illnesses – including critical preventative measures which we know safeguard women and children's lives for life – most notably pre-natal care to keep birth safe, and vaccination for deadly childhood diseases. These initiatives critically require funding. UNICEF is proactively responding, reacting and changing the ways it is delivering critical information and care, from in-person at health facilities to more remote online and other types of consultations. Additionally, UNICEF will need to gather data to measure the effects of the fear, the confinement and the strain on families which can often be disproportionately felt by women and young children to assess what changes UNICEF may need to make to longer term child health and protection programs as this epidemic lengthens. Activities will take place across the region based on the next movements of the epidemic, with specific emphasis on further prevention and preparatory measures in countries:

## **PROVIDE INFORMATION – AND TACKLING MISINFORMATION**

- Coordinate with authorities to track and respond to misinformation and people know how to prevent 2019-nCoV;
- Develop and broadcast videos to provide 2019-nCoV health advice, and provide information through social media, radio broadcast, and other channels. UNICEF is working on the first set of 10 short videos which can provide rapid quick advice on the principles of prevention;
- Launch nationwide handwashing campaigns in schools, health facilities and public spaces to improve preventive practices amongst children and the general public;
- Conduct targeted outreach to urban poor and other potentially high-risk communities, including utilization of existing social protection systems, to ensure delivery of accurate information on prevention and assistance access

## **KEY SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT & HYGIENE SUPPLIES FOR SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SPACES**

- UNICEF's operations in surrounding countries have been gearing up to help support health systems with critical supplies planned to help them manage cases including any necessary health worker supplies including goggles, surgical gowns, face mask, disposable gloves;
- In schools, health facilities and public spaces UNICEF will continue to provide key basic hygiene equipment including soaps, hand sanitizers, safe water provisions and handwashing stations where as well as the posters and promotional materials to promote handwashing and critical messaging on maintaining social distance

## **KEY HEALTHCARE SUPPORT**

- Provide specialist content and guidance to be past to frontline health workers on the specific detection of children affected by the virus, as well as content for health websites and platforms to help people access accurate information and advice;
- Ensure that women and children will have continued access to pre and post-natal care and essential nutritional supplies such as Vitamin A, zinc and micronutrients; and ensure that health workers are able to explain the risks, allay fears and provide services through this different medium for this especially vulnerable group;

- Provide technical support to primary, secondary and tertiary health facilities to manage outpatient and inpatient nutritional care for severe and acute malnutrition;
- Provide psychosocial support, counselling and rehabilitation support to children and families impacted by 2019-nCoV especially for those families who have been confined to their homes for long periods of time; and
- Provide preventative information and support for caretakers and adolescent mental health issues via platforms

**POSSIBLE SPECIALIST EDUCATION SUPPORT**

If children remain house bound after schools were due to return, activities may include:

- Support to Ministries of Education in the production of pre-primary and primary education lessons to be broadcasted on media and other channels;
- Provide learning materials to families to enable the continuity of parental, early childhood care, and education;
- UNICEF will also work with families and communities to ensure that children affected have access to adequate, alternative care arrangements.

Affected countries need to be able to manage the fears of people, meet the health risks and provide targeted information and services to be able to isolate and contain the virus before the economic and social effects create far worse situations for children as nations and families are removed from their livelihoods, their access to health and basic services – all severely affecting their overall well-being.

## Impact of Your Support

**UNICEF’s response is currently estimated at nearly \$12 million for the upcoming 3-6 months.** With your generous support, UNICEF will work across the region to ensure children and families receive the supplies and information needed to reduce the impact of the epidemic. Your contribution will help UNICEF focus its efforts on the urgent prevention of new infections through public health education and outreach; the scale up of alternative communications channels to help families who are confined at home to maintain their regular health and mental well-being; key relevant support to health systems to help boost supplies of key equipment; and most importantly to tackle misinformation that could have harmful effects on children.

PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED COST
Critical health prevention supplies & public information messaging services	\$7,155,000
Preparations for Education responses & child protection in the event of school closure	\$1,411,00
Health Care and Nutrition Support in the event of interrupted or overwhelmed healthcare provision	\$3,132,000
Data Gathering & Analysis	\$300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,998,000</b>

**On behalf of the children in the East Asia and Pacific Region, thank you for your support!**

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**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 [unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org).

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