

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesperson

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For Immediate Release

FACT SHEET

April 16, 2020

Release of U.S. Government Action Plan to Support the  
International Response to COVID-19

In collaboration with U.S. departments and agencies, the Department of State is releasing the U.S. Government Action Plan to Support the International Response to COVID-19. Through the American people's generosity and the U.S. government's action, the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trump Administration's National Security, National Biodefense, and Global Health Security Strategies prioritize fighting outbreaks at their source. An infectious disease threat anywhere is a threat everywhere, and we all must unite to fight this critical global health security challenge while ensuring we do not detract from the response in the U.S. homeland.

The U.S. Government is delivering a comprehensive package of services to support our international partners around the world in combatting COVID-19. Our "SAFER" package builds on current, substantial, and longstanding U.S. government global health and humanitarian assistance of over \$170 billion abroad over the past 20 years, which has created the foundation for many international partners to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats, including COVID-19. Our SAFER package will share U.S. expertise for global benefit, saving lives by improving international partners' abilities to respond to the pandemic, while reducing secondary impacts of the pandemic. Together, we will recover stronger.

The SAFER package is part of an All-of-America approach, leveraging the unique expertise, capacities, and mechanisms of various U.S. government departments and agencies to rapidly deploy and deliver essential support when, where, and to whom it is most critically needed. The focus is to: (1) Save lives by improving countries' and international partners' ability to respond to the pandemic; (2) Reduce secondary impacts of the pandemic; (3) Promote U.S. leadership and share U.S. expertise for global benefit. The United States is a leader in this worldwide fight to slow the spread of the virus, but it will take global coordination involving governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society (including faith-based organizations), the private sector, communities, and individuals to ensure that, through collective actions, we can achieve the maximum effectiveness and efficiency of our resources and response effort. We are prepared to help our international partners combat COVID-19 and will do all we can to ensure a world SAFER and more secure from infectious disease threats, now and in the future.

## **The United States is Delivering a “SAFER” and More Secure World from COVID-19**

- 1. Scale up community approaches to slow the spread of COVID-19, including:**
  - Widely disseminate culturally and linguistically appropriate guidance on social distancing, handwashing, self-isolation and quarantine, safe home care of infected people, and support host governments’ ability to do the same through diverse communication channels;
  - Set up community facilities for isolation of mild and moderate cases of illness and establish COVID-19 hotlines and referral systems;
  - Counteract COVID-19 rumors and misinformation through coordinated social marketing, social media, and local news media, including radio;
  - Empower individuals, families, and communities through health literacy to take responsibility for their own health;
  - Deploy effective social and behavioral change strategies; and
  - Support families and communities to safely and compassionately deal with expected large numbers of deaths from the virus.
  
- 2. Address critical needs of health care facilities (public and private, including faith-based), health care workers, and patients, including:**
  - Assist hospitals, clinics, and health networks to prepare for surge in health care facility needs;
  - Support host governments to coordinate donor responses to enable rational procurement, distribution, and access to critical COVID-19 medical supplies, including via United Nations agencies and other key stakeholders;
  - Provide strategies to relieve overburdened health institutions, such as safe patient flow and teaching safe home care of infected patients with mild or moderate disease;
  - Implement facility-based infection prevention and control strategies, including separate areas (tents, gazebos, etc.) for those with coughs and/or fevers; availability of soap and disinfectants; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities;
  - Facilitate continued patient access to essential health care (e.g., HIV, TB, malaria, immunization, nutrition), including via humanitarian exceptions for travel restrictions and border closures;
  - Train health care workers on scaled up infection prevention and control strategies during a public health emergency;
  - Provide accurate health information to education, faith, and other community leaders to facilitate trusted uptake of messages and social practices; and
  - Source, support, and scale high-potential innovations to meet critical health care needs in both the short-term and medium-term.
  
- 3. Find, investigate, and respond to COVID-19 cases through expanded disease surveillance and detection, including:**

- Increase laboratory capacity to test for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19) and improve quality control and assurance, as well as safe collection, specimen transport capacity, and security;
- Support case finding and contact tracing, leveraging existing in-country digital networks, where possible;
- Strengthen epidemiological surveillance capacity (national, community- and facility-based);
- Identify and rapidly respond to COVID-19 “hot spots” and prioritize the most vulnerable, including those in ongoing pre-COVID-19 humanitarian crises;
- Improve border health security and points of entry capabilities;
- Support development, integration, and/or strengthening of health information and emergency management systems;
- Identify risks for COVID-19 and evaluate impacts of preventive or protective interventions; and
- Identify risk of additional SARS-CoV-2 spillover from non-human animals.

**4. Employ strategies to address second order impacts (economic, security, and stabilization), including:**

- Use tailored strategies in complex humanitarian crises, extremely fragile states, conflict zones, and high-density population centers;
- Provide support for WASH; food security; protection and security of children, orphans, displaced persons, and refugees; prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation; basic health care, including primary care; and coordination of humanitarian assistance in specific settings;
- Encourage countries to develop and implement government and business continuity plans;
- Identify potential opportunities to support the welfare and education of children in high-impact communities;
- Counteract global competitors’ efforts to exploit the situation with price gouging and other nefarious activities;
- Provide macroeconomic support to address secondary impacts of COVID-19; and
- Bolster biosecurity and border security-related infrastructure and procedures.

**5. Ready plans for deployment of therapeutics and vaccines, diagnostics, and devices, including:**

- Develop, pre-position, and support research protocols for investigational therapeutics and vaccines;
- Support implementation of clinical trials of investigational therapeutics and vaccines with key partners, including the U.S. National Institutes of Health, Centers

- for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and the private sector;
- Work with relevant partners to use innovative funding strategies to finance low- and middle-income countries' access to therapeutics and vaccines;
  - Prepare for distribution and delivery of therapeutics and vaccines once they become available, including through global, regional, and local supply chains; and
  - Promote local and/or regional capacity to scale up production and delivery of vaccines and therapeutics once available.

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have adverse impacts across multiple sectors during the next 12 to 18 months, or longer, and may result in longer-term impacts beyond this timeframe. The U.S. Government must provide a direct and optimal response in a phased approach (immediate for response, shorter-term for recovery and longer-term for resiliency) based on country needs and readiness plans, U.S. Embassy and Mission requests, and on the epidemiological situation and severity of the outbreak within each country, recognizing the risk of future waves of the pandemic and possible re-emergence of the disease, especially in vulnerable populations.

Read more about the U.S. government's international response and assistance efforts online at [state.gov/coronavirus](https://state.gov/coronavirus), [USAID.gov/coronavirus](https://USAID.gov/coronavirus), [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV), and [Defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/](https://Defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/).