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# WFP COVID-19 Response Common Services Plan

8 April 2020



World Food  
Programme

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## Introduction

The UN Secretary-General has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is the worst crisis the world has faced since World War II. Governments are closing borders, restricting trade and grounding transport to try and contain the virus. National health structures are overwhelmed, understaffed and cannot cope with the pace the virus is spreading.

As of 8 April 2020, over 1,430,000 cases have been confirmed worldwide. COVID-19 does not distinguish between individuals or countries and the entire world is exposed. Countries with weak health systems and fragile socio-economic, political and security environments are particularly vulnerable.

To fight this, we need a coordinated global response and we need it now.

The World Food Programme (WFP), as the largest humanitarian organisation with proven expertise in supply chain and logistics, is working closely with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UN system and other humanitarian partners to deliver this global response – as outlined in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan launched on 25 March 2020.

As WFP invests in sustaining its own operations, WFP is setting up a comprehensive platform of services to enable the health and humanitarian community to deliver support to the most vulnerable populations. Existing partnerships with the public and private sector will be leveraged and used to complement WFP's logistics capabilities, assets, expertise and services.

The objectives of this are:

- Support health partners and country efforts to augment national health systems and enable access to critical medical supplies including equipment, treatment facilities and training.
- Ensure that those furthest behind, who rely on WFP and humanitarian partners for day-to-day support, continue to receive assistance.
- Ensure duty of care for WFP staff and the broader humanitarian community.

As outlined in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, an initial **USD 350 million is urgently required** to rapidly scale-up the common services that WFP is providing as well as ensure real-time monitoring of the global situation and provide critical investments required to safely deliver operations and services worldwide. This is an initial investment and will rapidly increase as requirements grow.

Specifically, the following activities require immediate funding:

Service	Cost (USD)
<b>Establish, equip and manage international consolidation hubs and regional staging areas</b>	61.4 million
<b>Air and shipping cargo services</b>	149 million
<b>Passenger air services</b>	53.8 million
<b>Medical Evacuation Services (MEDEVAC)</b>	53.6 million
<b>Infrastructure and construction of treatment centres</b>	18.5 million
<b>Real-time remote data collection and visualization</b>	4.8 million
<b>Critical investments required to safely deliver operations and services</b>	8.9 million
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>350 million</b>

NOTE: Costs for passenger and cargo transport services are for 9 months, costs for medevac services are for 2 months. All costs are approximate and subject to change, depending on how commercial markets and demands evolve.



COVID-19 items being dispatched from UNHRD Panama. Photo: WFP/Francisco Garrido



## Strategic Consolidation Hubs and Regional Staging Areas

WFP will establish **four strategic consolidation hubs** in Guangzhou, Liege, Dubai and Atlanta to support the effective and efficient global movement of cargo. These international hubs will be connected to **regional staging areas** in East and West Africa, Southern Africa, Central America, Asia and the Middle East – strategically located to serve the countries prioritized in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

This network of strategically located hubs will serve as cargo consolidation points, accepting and preparing all cargo for prioritized, coordinated forwarding to the regional staging areas and/or final destinations. Where possible, WFP will build upon the existing UNHRD network – and leverage in-house emergency telecommunications expertise, assets and partnerships to equip the hubs. Both at international and regional level, hubs will be sufficiently equipped to handle medical, dangerous air cargo as well as temperature-controlled items.

## Air and Sea Cargo Transport

Unprecedented restrictions on global international movement coupled with tightening of border controls worldwide has led to the disruption of global health and humanitarian supply-chains. WFP will set up air transport links between strategic hubs and regional staging areas – and onward to final destination countries where required - to ensure the predictable and sustained movement of life-saving humanitarian and medical cargo.

- **Bi-weekly cargo flights** will take place between the strategic hubs and regional staging areas. There will initially be 30-35 flights per month from each strategic hub with estimated cargo capacity of 100 mt per flight.
- **A medium-sized air cargo fleet** will be positioned in the regional staging areas to provide onward cargo movement to priority countries, if commercial services are disrupted. A monitoring system will be established to maximize efficient aircraft utilization.
- The need for an extensive air cargo network is growing rapidly and will be expanded in further revisions to the current appeal as demand and production capacity increase.
- For slow movement cargo, and specialised cargo that requires transport by sea, **WFP shipping services** will be availed.

## Passenger Air Transport

WFP will operate passenger air services to ensure that humanitarian and medical staff are not restricted by commercial transport closures and can rapidly reach the areas where they are most needed.

- **Five medium-sized passenger aircraft** (150-180 seater) will be made available to transport humanitarian and medical staff between international and regional hubs to critical countries of operation. Such air services will be used to fill the gap where commercial airlines are unavailable.
- If commercial services are further constrained, a regular **international passenger service** from Guangzhou, New York, Rome and Geneva to areas of operations will be established.



Preparing COVID-19 supplies to be dispatched to support healthcare workers. Photo: WFP/Francisco Garrido

## Medical Evacuation Services

Due to the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, worldwide movement restrictions and the grounding of commercial transport systems WFP will set up medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) services. We must ensure the safety and wellness of humanitarian and health responders whilst not creating additional burdens on host governments and their health systems.

MEDEVAC services will be based out of seven regional hubs serving field operations across the globe and will be adapted based on needs.

- **14 air ambulances** (two in each hub) will be positioned to facilitate the swift and safe movement of infected staff from operations back to hubs for treatment. The current budget caters for two months of the service at this scale.
- **100-bed field hospitals** will be established at each of the seven regional hubs. These will be staffed and managed by WHO personnel.
- **Overland ambulances** will be positioned for use at each of the COVID-19 field hospitals.

## Service Provision at Country Level

The Global Humanitarian Response Plan appeal does not include country-level service provision (i.e. “downstream services”). Any additional requirements will need to be on a cost-recovery basis or captured in a revision to the budget. Based on a review of past health emergencies, a portfolio of effective country-level services may include:

- Storage and handling for humanitarian and health cargo
- Overland in-country transport through WFP-contracted services or dedicated WFP fleet
- Humanitarian air services for passengers and cargo
- Goods and services procurement
- Fuel provision



*COVID-19 supplies on their way to support healthcare workers in the Philippines. Photo: WFP/Photolibrary*

