

**UN AND HUMANITARIAN ACTORS CALL FOR US\$165 MILLION  
TO RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UKRAINE**

(Kyiv, 26 March): In conjunction with the launch of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine Ms. Osnat Lubrani today issued the “Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan to the COVID-19 Pandemic,” calling for US\$165 million. The plan defines the response efforts being undertaken by the UN, front line humanitarian actors and public health and health service providers to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the virus transmission, which is estimated to impact up to 21 million people living in Ukraine.

Since the detection of the first COVID-19 case in Ukraine on 3 March, the number of cases continues to rise daily. Given the speed of transmission of COVID-19, there is a concern in the ability of the health system to cope with this unprecedented pressure. “While the exact prevalence of COVID-19 in the coming months is difficult to estimate at this stage, we know that a significant number of people could be infected. Out of this, at least every fifth needs medical attention. The physical distancing measures can slow down the virus to win time, however, they will not stop this pandemic. Our task, with partners, is to strengthen targeting tactics such as testing every suspected case, isolating and providing care across the country.” noted the World Health Organization Representative in Ukraine Dr. Jarno Habicht.

While the Government of Ukraine is making its own resources available to the response, the 2020 Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan to COVID-19 launched today represents an appeal of US\$165 million to support this response over the next nine months. The Plan considers the public health impact of the epidemic – as well as far-reaching consequences on the well-being of people and communities, which will go beyond the spread of disease, and span across many aspects of life from education, livelihoods, psychological well-being, and the ability to access basic human rights.

“We are keeping our finger on the pulse, carefully monitoring the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic and stand ready to support the Government of Ukraine in responding to the fast-evolving situation. Our top priority now is to act fast to deliver assistance to those who need it most, while taking precautions to ensure the safety of staff and the people we serve,” Ms. Lubrani remarked. “The stakes are too high, and time is of the essence. We call on Governments and all stakeholders to facilitate humanitarian action so that we can provide life-saving humanitarian assistance, which we will do with full respect of public health considerations,” Ms. Lubrani urged.

“We are deeply worried about the next phases of the crisis and the risk of it hitting some of the most vulnerable children and families in Ukraine – including those who have been displaced, those who face poverty, and those who live in areas with limited access to healthcare and social services,” said UNICEF Representative in Ukraine, Ms. Lotta Sylwander. “We will not be safe until the hardest to reach are safe too.”

While the Government of Ukraine swiftly introduced several decisive measures to contain the spread of the virus, there is a growing concern that eastern Ukraine – ravaged by six years of armed conflict, with weakened health systems and an aging population – may face particular



challenges in handling a COVID-19 outbreak. “A large proportion of the population in the conflict-affected area is elderly – some 36 per cent – rendering it even more vulnerable to COVID-19,” added Ms. Alice Armanni Sequi, Head of the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine. “We are particularly concerned for the elderly living in isolated settlements close to the “contact line” who are cut off from healthcare services due to insecurity, landmine contamination and poor road conditions,” Ms. Alice Armanni Sequi noted.

The humanitarian ask for Ukraine is an integral part of the “COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan” that was issued yesterday in Geneva and New York by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. “In the words of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, “We must come together to fight this virus, and as we do so, ensure that lifesaving relief operations around the world continue. It’s a moment for solidarity and global action.”

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