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DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

ASSIGNMENT

QUESTION :- IDENTIFY THE ROLES OF SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION IN RESPONDING TO COVID-19 GLOBALLY

INTRODUCTION

Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). A novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified in 2019 in Wuhan, China. This is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to [every continent](#) except Antarctica. Cases are rising daily in Africa the Americas, and Europe. Countries are racing to slow the spread of the virus by testing and treating patients, carrying out contact tracing, limiting travel, quarantining citizens, and cancelling large gatherings such as sporting events, concerts, and schools but COVID-19 is much more than a health crisis. By stressing every one of the countries it touches, it has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the UN's health agency, has played a crucial role in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, ever since the first cases were

identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December. At a press conference on Wednesday, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, outlined five ways the agency is leading the global response.

5 REASONS THE WORLD NEEDS WHO, TO FIGHT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1) Helping countries to prepare and respond

WHO has issued a [COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#), which identifies the major actions countries need to take, and the resources needed to carry them out. The plan, which is updated as fresh information and data improve WHO's understanding of the characteristics of the virus and how to respond, acts as a guide for developing country-specific plans. The health agency's six regional offices, and 150 country offices, work closely with governments around the world to prepare their health systems for the ravages of COVID-19, and to respond effectively when cases arrive and begin to mount.

With partners, WHO set up the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, to ensure patients get the care they need, and frontline workers get essential supplies and information; and to accelerate research and development of a vaccine and treatments for all who need them.

With donations from governments, the private sector and individuals, more than \$800 million has been pledged or received for the response so far.

2) Providing Accurate Information, Busting Dangerous Myths

The internet is awash with information about the pandemic, some of it useful, some of it false or misleading. In the midst of this "infodemic", WHO is producing accurate, useful guidance that can help save lives.

This includes around 50 pieces of technical advice for the public, health workers and countries, with evidence-based guidance on every element of the response, and [exploding dangerous myths](#).

The health agency benefits from the expertise of a global network of health professionals and scientists, including epidemiologists, clinicians and virologists, to ensure that the response is as comprehensive, authoritative and representative as possible.

To ensure information is correct and helpful, WHO set up a team to give everyone access to timely, accurate and easy-to-understand advice, from trusted sources. In addition, daily situation reports and press briefings, as well as briefings with governments, are keeping the world informed about the latest data, information and evidence.

Many social media and tech companies are working closely with WHO to aid the flow of reliable information, including Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok; and chatbots on the Whatsapp and Viber platforms have garnered millions of followers, sending out timely updates and reports.

3) Ensuring Vital Supplies Reach Frontline Health Workers

Personal protective equipment is essential to ensure health professionals are able to save lives, including their own. So far, WHO has shipped more than two million items of personal protective equipment to 133 countries, and is preparing to ship another two million items in the coming weeks. More than a million diagnostic tests have been dispatched to 126 countries, in all regions, and more are being sourced.

However, far more is needed, and WHO is working with the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Economic Forum, and others in the private sector, to ramp up the production and distribution of essential medical supplies.

On 8 April, WHO launched a “UN COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force”, which aims to dramatically increase the supply of essential protective equipment where it is needed.

4) Training And Mobilizing Health Workers

WHO is aiming to train millions of health workers, via its OpenWHO platform. Thanks to this online tool, life-saving knowledge is being transferred to frontline personnel by the Organization, and its key partners.

Users take part in a worldwide, social learning network, based on interactive, online courses and materials covering a variety of subjects. OpenWHO also serves as a forum for the rapid sharing of public health expertise, and in-depth discussion and feedback on key issues. So far, more than 1.2 million people have enrolled in 43 languages.

Countries are also being supported by experts, deployed around the world by the WHO’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). During outbreaks, the network ensures that the right technical expertise and skills are on the ground where and when they are needed most.

Emergency Medical Teams are also an important part of the global health workforce. These teams are highly trained, and self-sufficient, and are sent to places identified as disaster or emergency zones.

5) The search for a vaccine

Laboratories in many countries are already conducting tests that, it is hoped, will eventually lead to a vaccine. In an attempt to corral these efforts, WHO brought together 400 of the world's leading researchers in February, to identify research priorities.

The agency launched a “Solidarity Trial”, an international clinical trial, involving 90 countries, to help find effective treatment. The aim is to rapidly discover whether any existing drugs can slow the progression of the disease, or improve survival.

To better understand the virus, WHO has developed research protocols that are being used in more than 40 countries, in a coordinated way, and some 130 scientists, funders and manufacturers from around the world have signed a statement committing to work with WHO to speed the development of a vaccine against COVID-19.

UNDP RESPONSE

Every country needs to act immediately to prepare, respond, and recover. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has launched a US\$2 billion global humanitarian response plan in the most vulnerable. Developing countries could lose at least US\$220 billion in income, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has called for [US\\$2.5 trillion](#) to support them.

Drawing on our experience with other outbreaks such as Ebola, HIV, SARS, TB and malaria, as well as our long history of working with the private and public sector, UNDP will help countries to [urgently and effectively respond](#) to COVID-

19 as part of its mission to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience to crises and shocks.

We have been supporting countries since the very early stages of this crisis, donating more than two million surgical masks and providing life supporting medical equipment such as X-ray machines, infrared thermometers, infusion pumps, protective suits, gloves and hand sanitizer. We are supporting health systems in countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Panama and Ukraine.

In China we launched a social media campaign to spread information about COVID-19 amongst vulnerable communities such as the elderly and other disadvantaged people in 40 different minority languages.

In Lebanon we're supporting the government as it develops a Disaster Risk Management Plan. And in Viet Nam we're working with the government to communicate with ethnic minorities and those with disabilities, with a focus on the rural areas on China's border.

Working with [WhatsApp](#), WHO and UNICEF we have created an information hub that will get real time healthcare to billions around the world.