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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

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**IDENTITFY THE ROLES OF SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN
RESPONDING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC GLOBALLY.**

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell. Coronavirus disease spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze. It also spreads when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. 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 8th of April, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, outlined five ways the agency is leading the global response.

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 “info emic”, 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 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. 2Many social media and tech companies are working closely with WHO to aid the flow of reliable information, including Instagram, LinkedIn and Tik-tok; and chatbots on the WhatsApp and Viber platforms have garnered millions of followers, sending out timely updates and reports.

3. Training and mobilizing health workers

WHO is aiming to train millions of health workers, via its Open WHO 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. Open WHO 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.