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**PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY**

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**QUESTION**: Identify the roles of specific international organizations in responding to COVID-19 pandemic globally.

International organizations which is defined as a formal organization with members from two or more states that come together to achieve a specific goal or objective has a significant role in shaping modern international order. Also, international organizations such as United Nations, World Bank, NATO (Regional organizations), Amnesty international, Human Rights watch, IMF and so on, helps to coordinate global response.

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus is defined as any group of RNA viruses that cause a variety of diseases in humans and other animals. Coronaviruses (CoV) is a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. In humans they’re typically spread via airborne droplets of fluid produced by infected individuals. It is also referred to as coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19. The name “coronavirus” comes from crown-like projections on their surfaces. “Corona” in Latin means “halo” or “crown”. Researchers first isolated a coronavirus in 1937. They found a coronavirus responsible for an infectious bronchitis virus in birds that had the ability to devastate poultry stocks. Cold or flu like symptoms usually set in and are typically mild. However, symptoms vary from person-to-person, and some forms of the virus can be fatal. Coronaviruses can mutate effectively, which makes them so contagious. COVID-19 has already upended life in some of the wealthiest countries. It is now reaching places where people live in warzones, cannot easily access clean water and soap, and have no hope of a hospital bed if they fall critically ill. International organizations such as WHO(World Health Organization), IOM(International Organization for Migration), ILO(International Labour Organization), UN(United Nations) and so on have responded and are still responding to the recent pandemic that affects the world globally.

Using a case study, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) evolves as an international organization which responds to the recent pandemic affecting the world globally. It is an intergovernmental organization that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers. Research has it that on 19 March, 2020, IOM launched the USD 116.1 million COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Respond Plan (SRP) to support countries that may need additional resources-financial, technical or operational to help ensure that further COVID-19 infections are prevented, and to assist health systems so they have increased capacity to cope with additional requirements. The new appeal complements and is aligned with the WHO’S COVID-19 Global Preparedness and Response Plan, issued on 3rd February, as well as the upcoming inter-Agency standing committee Humanitarian Response Plan, led by the UN office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Since January, IOM’S global workforce has been mobilized across the world. Its strategic response focuses on reaching the vulnerable and building operational capacities to address the mobility dimensions of this pandemic. These roles and actions are:

1. **Training for government employees**

IOM has previously undertaken trainings on standard operating procedures at point of entry during health emergencies. This can be extended to address COVID-19 operational needs and be done virtually.

1. **Population mobility mapping exercise**

This anticipate the needs and prioritize measures by layering information about travel restrictions, points of entry status, airlines and the status of stranded migrants in collaboration with WHO. These have been undertaken in many countries and it is important that governments and frontline response teams have a solid understanding of population movements and mobility dynamics so vulnerable groups can be reached in a timely manner.

1. **Enhanced surveillance, and wash services at entry points**

IOM is increasing water access and hygiene measures at scale across Asia, and all US-bound migrants undergoing health checks at IOM centers receive information, hand sanitizer and tissues.

1. **Risk communication and community engagement activities**

This is done by leveraging community networks to ensure public health information is communicated in accessible and culturally appropriate ways to the most vulnerable, including migrants, regardless of status. In Greece, IOM has conducted information sessions in mainland camps for migrants, translating government information, as well as distributing suppliers.

1. **Scale-back and/or suspension of a number of migration** health assessment programs, visa application programs etc. IOM has adopted a number of precautionary measures, including the development of specific standard operating procedures for COVID-19, health education and counseling for migrants, and strengthening of pre-embarkation checks.

However, it is stated on the 31st December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the people republic of China. On 11 March 2020, the world health organization announced that the pathogen known as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), now constituted a pandemic an endemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. 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. WHO is working 24/7 to analyze data, provide advice, coordinate etc to fight the outbreak of the unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China on 31st December, 2019. The WHO has spearheaded several initiatives like COVID-19 solidarity response fund for fundraising for the pandemic and solidarity trial for investigating potential treatment options for the disease. To help countries navigate through these challenges WHO has updated operational planning guildelines in balancing the demands of responding directly to COVID-19 while maintaining essential health services delivery, and mitigating the risk of system collapse. This includes a set of targeted immediate actions that countries should consider at national, regional, and local level to reorganize and maintain access to high quality essential health services for all. Some of these examples of essential services include: routine vaccination; reproductive health services including care during pregnancy and childbirth; care of young infants and older adults; management of mental health conditions as well as noncommunicable diseases and infectious diseases like HIV, malaria and TB; critical inpatient therapies; management of emergency health conditions; auxiliary services like basic diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, and blood bank services, among others.

Furthermore, as for the response to COVID-19, WHO are:

1. Working hard with the support of their headquarters and in partnership with many other organizations including the African Union, the Africa Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention of Africa (CDC) and other UN agencies, to support African countries. First, early on in preparation carried out by WHO a significant amount of training for health care workers in surveillance, case management and laboratory diagnostics. Some capacity has also been built through world health organization training.
2. They have also helped member states develop national response plans. These member states have now developed a plan, which is central to their being able to mobilze the resources needed for a good state of readiness and to enable them to respond if they have COVID-19 cases.
3. They have also mobilized experts among countries to exchange expertise and help carry out such functions such as establishing an incident management system-one of the most crucial elements because it is where all the data is put together and actions to be taken are coordinated.
4. They have also helped many countries set up rapid response teams so that they know exactly who has to go where, to do what in order to make sure they are fully prepared.
5. They have also worked with partners and with other UN agencies to help countries prepare, recognizing that the response to this pandemic does not lie in the actions of the health sector only. The need for all governments to respond and multi-sectoral response among the UN agencies. Another example is our strong promotion of hand hygiene: hand-washing. As we all know in many countries, water is simply not easily available and, many households don’t have running water and others may be using communal taps.

COVID-19 is menacing the whole of humanity and so the whole of humanity and so the whole of humanity must fight back. Individual country responses are not going to be enough. We must come aid of the ultra-vulnerable millions upon millions of people who are least able to protect themselves. This is a matter of basic human solidarity. It is also crucial for combating the virus. This pandemic has already upended life in some of the world’s wealthiest countries. It is now reaching places where people live in warzones, cannot easily access clean water and soap, and have no hope of a hospital be if they fall critically ill. To leave the world’s poorest and most vulnerable countries to their fate would be both cruel and unwise. According to UNICEF, ‘our priority is to help these countries prepare and continue helping the millions who rely on humanitarian assistance from the UN to survive. Properly funded, our global response effort will equip humanitarian organization to be able to fight the virus, save lives and help stop the spread of the virus.

In conclusion, countries battling with the pandemic at home are rightly prioritizing people living in their own communities. But the hard truth is they will be falling to protect their own people if they do not act now to help the poorest countries protect themselves.

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