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Question: identify the roles of specific international organisation in responding to COVID-19 pandemic globally.

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses belonging to the family of Coronaviridae, which infect both animals and humans. Human coronaviruses can cause mild disease similar to a common cold, while others cause more severe disease (such as MERS - Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). A new coronavirus that previously has not been identified in humans emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Signs and symptoms include respiratory symptoms and include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and sometimes death. Standard recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include frequent cleaning of hands using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water; covering the nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing; and avoiding close contact with anyone that has a fever and cough.

Various international organisations are working with states to help manage and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the World Health Organisation (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations is at the forefront of it all. WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus and to provide timely advice on measures to protect people’s health and prevent the spread of this outbreak. The World Health Organization (WHO) acts as a coordinating authority on international [public health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health) and deals with health, sanitation, diseases and sends medical teams to help combat [epidemics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epidemics). Some functions of WHO are: 1.It helps countries to improve their health system by building up infrastructure especially manpower, institutions and services for the individual community 2.It aims at fighting diseases and preventing them from spreading. With this it can be said that the World Health Organisation plays a major role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In his 8 April press briefing, WHO head Adhanom Tedros said that WHO is involved with many other initiatives and actions, but all of them come under these five essential pillars. The agency’s focus, he said, is “on working with countries and with partners to bring the world together to confront this common threat together”. A particular concern, he added, is for the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, in all countries, and WHO is committed to “serve all people of the world with equity, objectivity and neutrality.” The five essential pillars include:

1. Helping countries to prepare and respond to the pandemic.

The WHO has issued a COVID-19Strategic 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 the 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. Making a brief remark during his press conference, the officer in Charge, WHO Nigeria Dr Clement Lugala Peter stated that “WHO has deployed surge staff and provided medical and laboratory supplies to the Government of Nigeria and is fully committed to supporting the country in responding and containing the spread of the disease.”

1. Providing accurate information

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.

1. 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 2020, 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.

1. Training and mobilizing healthcare 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.

1. 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, the 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.

As knowledge of the virus develops, WHO will continue to create and update technical guidance. Useful materials include:

• Emerging respiratory viruses, including nCoV: methods for detection, prevention, response and control • Surveillance and case definitions • Early investigations • Patient management • Infection prevention and control • Laboratory guidance • Country readiness • Risk communication and community engagement • Disease commodity package • Reduction of transmission from animals to humans