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QUESTION: IDENTIFY THE ROLES OF SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN RESPONDING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC GLOBALLY.

**INTRODUCTION**

The 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus that broke out in December 2019. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment.  Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic has had far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease and efforts to quarantine it. As the pandemic has spread around the globe, concerns have shifted from supply-side manufacturing issues to decreased business in the services sector. The pandemic caused the largest global recession in history, with more than a third of the global population at the time being placed on lockdown. The pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools and universities. According to data released by UNESCO on 25 March, school and university closures due to COVID-19 were implemented nationwide in 165 countries. Including localized closures, this affects over 1.5 billion students worldwide, accounting for 87% of enrolled learners. The pandemic has impacted religion in various ways, including the cancellation of the worship services of various faiths, the closure of Sunday Schools, as well as the cancellation of pilgrimages surrounding observances and festivals. Economic turmoil associated with the coronavirus pandemic has wide-ranging and severe impacts upon financial markets, including stock, bond and commodity (including crude oil and gold) markets.

There’s currently no treatment specifically approved for COVID-19, and no cure for an infection, although treatments and vaccines are currently under study. Countries all over the world are putting in joint efforts by method of research among others in attempt at finding treatment. Apart from states, several international organizations are also responding to the pandemic in various forms. Some of them include the UN, WHO, UNESCO, IOM and World Bank among others.

**THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

Its declared purpose is to contribute to promoting international collaboration in education, sciences, and culture in order to increase universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights along with fundamental freedom proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. UNESCO's aim is "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information". Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These nationwide closures are impacting over 91% of the world’s student population. Several other countries have implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning. In the context of widespread school closures to slow the spread of COVID-19, UNESCO is working with ministries of education in affected and concerned countries to ensure continued learning for all children and youth through alternative channels. These efforts made by the UNESCO are entirely global in scope and they include Global education coalition to support countries in scaling up their best distance learning practices and reaching children and youth who are most at risk, A selection of digital learning resources that governments, schools, teachers, parents can use to open opportunities for learners unable to attend to school, Technical assistance to quickly prepare and deploy inclusive distant learning solutions, utilizing hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches and Global monitoring of country-wide and localized school closures and the number of learners affected among others.

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. Its main objective is ensuring "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.” The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting communities all over the world.

With 149 offices in countries worldwide, WHO is leading the global effort to support countries in preventing, detecting, and responding to the pandemic. WHO is also monitoring the response: 143 countries have now their own COVID-19 response plans, and almost all (194) countries have adopted public health and other response measures based on WHO’s guidance. The response also covers the procurement of supplies. As of 2 March, WHO has bought and shipped 1.5 million coronavirus test kits and close to 800 000 face masks across the planet, delivering personal protective gear to more than 70 countries. At the same time, more than half of WHO’s personnel are responding on the ground by providing real-time updates, expertise, and coordination as governments, humanitarian agencies, and the public race to respond.

The first United Nations “Solidarity Flight” to Addis Ababa transported the vital medical cargo to all countries in Africa, where supplies are desperately needed to contain the spread of COVID-19. One million face masks, as well as personal protective equipment such as face shields, gloves, goggles, gowns, medical aprons enough to protect health workers were transported to the continent.

Also, since late January 2020, WHO has been providing support to the response to COVID-19 of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in areas of Training of health workers in infection prevention and control, Establishment of 7 testing laboratories, Case management, Surveillance and case investigation, Health information and screening at the points of entry and Risk communication and community engagement.

Other international organizations such as the World Bank Group are also taking steps and putting efforts at responding to the COVID-19 all around the world. For example, the World Bank Group, with approval today from its Board is immediately launching emergency support through operations around the world and expects to deploy up to $160 billion over the next 15 months to help countries protect the poor and vulnerable, support businesses, and bolster economic recovery as well as immediate debt suspension for poorest countries.

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