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Identity the roles of specific international organisation in responding to COVID-19 pandemic globally.

Various International Organisations all over the world, regardless of function and structure have no doubt been affected by the Corona Virus pandemic worldwide. Imperatively; they have responded positively, offering help where needed and going out of their way to see that the world comes out of this with safe and sound. One of the most prominent and most important international organisations to look at when examining the roles of organisations would be The World Health Organisation.

The World Health Organisation

Without reasonable doubt, the roles that WHO has played in the course of this pandemic is one to be commended for. Starting from the notification put out by the organisation referring to the virus as a “pneumonia of unknown cause” to the declaration of the coronavirus disease as a pandemic in March 2020, the organisation has been at the fore front in tackling the virus and providing aid where necessary. They have provided daily updates, sensitisation, situation reports. They have coordinated global response to the pandemic and are currently on ground in 149 countries of the world. Desperate situations they say require desperate measures and WHO recognised the need for special funds to tackle the virus and so; A Solidarity Response Find was created to raise money to fight the pandemic. This fund aims to help countries by providing diagnostic laboratories, improving surveillance and data collection, providing equipment for frontline health workers, maintain intensive care units and other critical steps to develop the public health response to the pandemic. This Solidarity Response Fund is peculiar in the sense that corporations, institutions, private individuals anywhere in the world are open to donation as the world needs all the help it can get. The WHO in partnership with the United Nations foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation are seeking financing for protective equipment for frontline health workers; to equip diagnostic laboratories; improve surveillance and data collection; establish and maintain intensive care units; strengthen supply chains; accelerate research and development of vaccines and therapeutics;  and take other critical steps to scale up the public health response to the pandemic. Social media in partnership with WHO has also raised awareness in the general public; campaigns encouraging people to wash their hands, a TV concert by Lady Gaga to raise funds for health workers. E-learning courses have also been launched to educate people about coronavirus, it’s various aspects and an effective preparedness and response system.

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

In line with its other sister organisations, UNICEF has also contributed to worldwide struggle to manage and properly fight the coronavirus pandemic. The organisation is currently reviewing its appeal to meet increased needs of poor communities to help combat the spread of the virus. They have continued to offer assistance to individuals in affected areas by ensuring the continuity of essential social services and the adoption of various strategies. Some of this strategies are the promotion of effective hand washing, good hygiene practices along with other tools like social distancing. The need for the less privileged public to understand these techniques and practice them cannot be overemphasized. These families need to know how to protect themselves and proper protocol to follow incase of any emergencies. Also, they have gone the extra mile to support individual national efforts to combat the virus by providing WASH services which include adequate water, sanitation and hygiene to help with infection prevention and control (IPC). UNICEF and her partners have reached 86 million affected people in East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia with prevention messages, mainly centered around hand washing. The COVID-19 U-Report chatbot, a valuable digital public good has been deployed in 24 countries, reaching over 1 million young people in communities including refugees and migrants with more than 3 million chatbot interactions. The not is designed to reduce misinformation by providing life saving information, tracking rumours and yielding vital information about the symptoms, transmission and prevention of COVID-19.

The United Nations

The United Nations is one of the most recognised international organisations in the world and in international dealings and contributions to the COVID-19 situation is one responsibility they can’t avoid or run away from. They have risen to the task and have released US$15million to fund global efforts in combating the virus. Mark Lowcock; Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has stated that the grant from the UN's Emergency Fund will help with countries with fragile health systems boost their detection and response operations. It has the potential to save the lives of millions of vulnerable people. Apart from medical aid to affected countries, the UN hasn’t relented in its ever efficient peacekeeping operations and the protection of its personnel in peacekeeping missions. Measures are being taken to ensure all missions are in a state of readiness for emergency situation, including capabilities to evacuate UN personnel by air. Some of this peacekeeping missions in various countries have joined the fight against the virus. Examples of such missions are the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus who is working with women’s organisation to support outreach efforts for women who may be experiencing domestic violence during the quarantine, The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali which has set up a hand-washing station in the Ansongo, Gao region. The peacekeepers there are also using patrols to teach people about COVID-19 prevention.

Some international organisations although not directly concerned with that pandemic in the sense of sending medical aid and resources have not excluded themselves however from contributing in monetary ways. The World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund which are international financial institutions created to regulate financial dealings in the international relations between states have also come together to provide support in regards to the pandemic. The IMF has leveraged their $1 trillion lending capacity, approved a short term liquidity line for countries with very strong economic fundamental and exploring additional tools to help meet countries' financing needs, doubling annual access limits for our rapid disbursing vehicles to about $100 billion to respond to unprecedented calls for emergency financing from more than 100 countries. The World Bank Group and IMF leaders in line with the G20 countries have agreed to temporarily suspend debt payments to International Development Association and least developed countries beginning May 1, 2020.

References.

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