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29 June 2020 | Statement | Reading time: 46 min (12405 words)

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[Click here for the interactive timeline](#)

Last updated 28 December 2020 to restore some dates that had been inadvertently deleted from this text version of the timeline. They remained in the interactive timeline throughout.

WHO provides this timeline of the Organization's COVID-19 response activities for general information. WHO will update the timeline on a regular basis and in light of evolving events and new information. Unless noted otherwise, country-specific information and data are as reported to WHO by its Member States.

This timeline supersedes the [WHO Timeline statement](#) published in April 2020. It is not intended to be exhaustive and does not contain details of every event or WHO activity.

As of 11 December 2020, the following milestones and events focused on COVID-19 have taken place:

- The Director-General and Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme have held [120 media briefings](#). The Director-General's [opening remarks](#), [transcripts](#), [videos](#) and [audio recordings](#) for these media briefings are available online.
- There have been 38 Member State Briefings and information sessions.
- WHO convenes international expert networks, covering topics such as clinical management, laboratory and virology, infection prevention and control, mathematical modelling, seroepidemiology, and research and development for diagnostics,

therapeutics and vaccines, which have held frequent teleconferences, starting in early January. These networks include thousands of scientists, medical and public health professionals from around the world.

- The [OpenWHO](#) platform has had more than 4.7 million total course enrolments, with 149 courses available to support the COVID-19 response, spanning 22 topics and 44 languages for COVID-19.
- The [Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Infectious Hazards](#) (STAG-IH) has met 53 times. STAG-IH provides independent advice and analysis to the WHO Health Emergencies Programme on the infectious hazards that may pose a threat to global health security.

As of 8 December 2020, WHO's [landscape of COVID-19 candidate vaccines](#) lists 52 candidate vaccines in clinical evaluation and 162 in preclinical evaluation.

In addition to the selected guidance included below, all of WHO's technical guidance on COVID-19 can be found online [here](#).

All events listed below are in the Geneva, Switzerland time zone (CET/CEST). Note that the dates listed for documents are based on when they were finalized and timestamped.

31 Dec 2019

WHO's Country Office in the People's Republic of China picked up a media statement by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission from their website on cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, People's Republic of China.

The Country Office notified the International Health Regulations (IHR) focal point in the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office about the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission media statement of the cases and provided a translation of it.

WHO's Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS) platform also picked up a [media report](#) on ProMED (a programme of the International Society for Infectious Diseases) about the same cluster of cases of "pneumonia of unknown cause", in Wuhan.

Several health authorities from around the world contacted WHO seeking additional information.

1 January 2020

WHO requested information on the reported cluster of atypical pneumonia cases in Wuhan from the Chinese authorities.

WHO activated its [Incident Management Support Team](#) (IMST), as part of its emergency response framework, which ensures coordination of activities and response across the three levels of WHO (Headquarters, Regional, Country) for public health emergencies.

2 January 2020

The WHO Representative in China wrote to the National Health Commission, offering WHO support and repeating the request for further information on the cluster of cases.

WHO informed [Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network](#) (GOARN) partners about the cluster of pneumonia cases in the People's Republic of China. GOARN partners include major public health agencies, laboratories, sister UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs.

3 January 2020

Chinese officials provided information to WHO on the cluster of cases of 'viral pneumonia of unknown cause' identified in Wuhan.

4 January 2020

WHO [tweeted](#) that there was a cluster of pneumonia cases – with no deaths – in Wuhan, Hubei province, People's Republic of China, and that investigations to identify the cause were underway.

5 January 2020

WHO shared detailed information about a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause through the IHR (2005) Event Information System, which is accessible to all Member States. The event notice provided information on the cases and advised Member States to take precautions to reduce the risk of acute respiratory infections.

WHO issued its first Disease Outbreak News report. This is a public, web-based platform for the publication of technical information addressed to the scientific and public health communities, as well as global media. The report contained information about the number of cases and their clinical status; details about the Wuhan national authority's response measures; and WHO's risk assessment and advice on public health measures. It advised that "WHO's recommendations on public health measures and surveillance of influenza and severe acute respiratory infections still apply".

9 January 2020

WHO reported that Chinese authorities have determined that the outbreak is caused by a novel

coronavirus.

WHO convened the first of many teleconferences with global expert networks, beginning with the Clinical Network.

10-12 January 2020

WHO published a comprehensive package of guidance documents for countries, covering topics related to the management of an outbreak of a new disease:

- [Infection prevention and control](#)
- [Laboratory testing](#)
- [National capacities review tool](#)
- [Risk communication and community engagement](#)
- [Disease Commodity Package \(v1\)](#)
- [Disease Commodity Package \(v2\)](#)
- [Travel advice](#)
- [Clinical management](#)
- [Surveillance case definitions](#)

10 January 2020

The Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Infectious Hazards (STAG-IH) held its [first meeting](#) on the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The Global Coordination Mechanism for Research and Development to prevent and respond to epidemics held its [first teleconference](#) on the novel coronavirus, as did the Scientific Advisory Group of the research and development (R&D) [Blueprint](#), a global strategy and preparedness plan that allows the rapid activation of research and development activities during epidemics.

The Director-General spoke with the Head of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China. He also had a call to share information with the Director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

11 January 2020

WHO [tweeted](#) that it had received the genetic sequences for the novel coronavirus from the People's Republic of China and expected these to soon be made publicly available.

Chinese media reported the first death from the novel coronavirus.

13 January 2020

WHO convened the first teleconference with the diagnostics and laboratories global expert network.

The Ministry of Public Health in Thailand [reported an imported case of lab-confirmed](#) novel coronavirus from Wuhan, the first recorded case outside of the People's Republic of China.

WHO publishes [first protocol for a RT-PCR assay](#) by a WHO partner laboratory to diagnose the novel coronavirus.

14 January 2020

WHO held a press briefing during which it [stated](#) that, based on experience with respiratory pathogens, the potential for human-to-human transmission in the 41 confirmed cases in the People's Republic of China existed: "it is certainly possible that there is limited human-to-human transmission".

[WHO tweeted](#) that preliminary investigations by the Chinese authorities had found "no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission". In its [risk assessment](#), WHO said additional investigation was "needed to ascertain the presence of human-to-human transmission, modes of transmission, common source of exposure and the presence of asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic cases that are undetected".

15 January 2020

The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare informed WHO of a confirmed case of a novel coronavirus in a person who travelled to Wuhan. This was the second confirmed case detected outside of the People's Republic of China. [WHO stated](#) that considering global travel patterns, additional cases in other countries were likely.

16 January 2020

The Pan American Health Organization/WHO Regional office for the Americas (PAHO/AMRO) issued its [first epidemiological alert](#) on the novel coronavirus. The alert included recommendations covering international travellers, infection prevention and control measures and laboratory testing.

17 January 2020

WHO convened the first meeting of the analysis and modelling working group for the novel coronavirus.

19 January 2020

The WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WHO/WPRO) [tweeted](#) that, according to the latest information received and WHO analysis, there was evidence of limited human-to-human transmission.

20 January 2020

WHO published [guidance](#) on home care for patients with suspected infection.

20-21 January 2020

WHO conducted the [first mission to Wuhan](#) and met with public health officials to learn about the response to the cluster of cases of novel coronavirus.

21 January 2020

WHO/WPRO [tweeted](#) that it was now very clear from the latest information that there was “at least some human-to-human transmission”, and that infections among health care workers strengthened the evidence for this.

The United States of America (USA) reported its first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus. This was the [first case](#) in the WHO Region of the Americas.

WHO convened the first meeting of the global expert network on infection prevention and control.

22 January 2020

The WHO mission to Wuhan issued [a statement](#) saying that evidence suggested human-to-human transmission in Wuhan but that more investigation was needed to understand the full extent of transmission.

22-23 January 2020

The WHO Director-General [convened](#) an IHR Emergency Committee (EC) regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus. The EC was comprised of [15 independent experts](#) from around the world and was charged with advising the Director-General as to whether the outbreak constituted a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

The Committee was not able to reach a conclusion on 22 January based on the limited information available. As the Committee was not able to make a recommendation, the Director-General asked the Committee to continue its deliberations the next day. The Director-General held a [media briefing](#) on the novel coronavirus, to provide an update on the Committee’s deliberations.

The EC met again on 23 January and members were equally divided as to whether the event constituted a PHEIC, as several members considered that there was still not enough information for it, given its restrictive and binary nature (only PHEIC or no PHEIC can be determined; there is no intermediate level of warning). As there was a divergence of views, the EC did not advise the Director-General that the event constituted a PHEIC but said it was ready to be reconvened within 10 days. The EC [formulated advice](#) for WHO, the People's Republic of China, other countries and the global community.

The Director-General accepted the advice of the Committee and held a second media briefing, giving a [statement](#) on the advice of the EC and what WHO was doing in response to the outbreak.

24 January 2020

France informed WHO of three cases of novel coronavirus, all of whom had travelled from Wuhan. These were [the first confirmed cases in the WHO European region](#) (EURO).

WHO held an [informal consultation](#) on the prioritization of candidate therapeutic agents for use in novel coronavirus infection.

The Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) [urged countries in the Americas](#) to be prepared to detect early, isolate and care for patients infected with the new coronavirus, in case of receiving travelers from countries where there was ongoing transmission of novel coronavirus cases. The Director spoke at a PAHO briefing for ambassadors of the Americas to the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington.

25 January 2020

The WHO Regional Director for Europe issued a [public statement](#) outlining the importance of being ready at the local and national levels for detecting cases, testing samples and clinical management.

26 January 2020

WHO released its [first](#) free online course on the novel coronavirus on its OpenWHO learning platform.

27 January 2020

The WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia issued a [press release](#) that urged countries in the Region to focus on their readiness for the rapid detection of imported cases and prevention of further spread.

27-28 January 2020

A senior WHO delegation led by the Director-General arrived in Beijing to meet Chinese leaders, learn more about the response in the People's Republic of China, and to offer technical assistance. [The Director-General met with President Xi Jinping](#) on 28 January, and discussed continued collaboration on containment measures in Wuhan, public health measures in other cities and provinces, conducting further studies on the severity and transmissibility of the virus, continuing to share data, and a request for China to share biological material with WHO. They agreed that an international team of leading scientists should travel to China to better understand the context, the overall response, and exchange information and experience.

29 January 2020

On his return to Switzerland from China, the Director-General presented an [update](#) to Member States on the response to the outbreak of novel coronavirus infection in China, at the 30th Meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC) of the Executive Board. He informed the PBAC that he had reconvened the Emergency Committee on the novel coronavirus under the IHR (2005), which would meet the following day to advise on whether the outbreak constituted a PHEIC.

The Director-General also held a [press briefing](#) on his visit to China and announced the reconvening of the EC the next day. The Director-General based the decision to reconvene on the “deeply concerning” continued increase in cases and evidence of human-to-human transmission outside China, in addition to the numbers outside China holding the potential for a much larger outbreak, even though they were still relatively small. The Director-General also spoke of his agreement with President Xi Jinping that WHO would lead a team of international experts to visit China as soon as possible to work with the government on increasing the understanding of the outbreak, to guide global response efforts.

WHO held the first of its weekly informal discussions with a group of public health leaders from around the world, in line with its commitment to conducting listening exercises and outreach beyond formal mechanisms.

The United Arab Emirates reported the first cases in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. The Regional Director [affirmed](#) that the Regional Office continued to monitor disease trends and work with Member States to ensure the ability “to detect and respond to potential cases”.

The Pandemic Supply Chain Network (PSCN) created by WHO, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, [held](#) its first meeting. The mission of PSCN is “to create and manage a market network allowing for WHO and private sector partners to access any supply chain functionality and asset from end-to-end anywhere in the world at any scale”.

WHO published [advice](#) on the use of masks in the community, during home care and in health

care settings.

30 January 2020

WHO held a Member State briefing to provide more information about the outbreak.

The WHO Director-General reconvened the [IHR Emergency Committee](#) (EC).

The EC advised the Director-General that the outbreak now met the criteria for a PHEIC. The Director-General accepted the EC's advice and [declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a PHEIC](#). At that time there were 98 cases and no deaths in 18 countries outside China. Four countries had evidence (8 cases) of human-to-human transmission outside China (Germany, Japan, the United States of America, and Viet Nam).

The EC formulated advice for the People's Republic of China, all countries and the global community, which the Director-General accepted and issued as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR. The Director-General gave a [statement](#), providing an overview of the situation in China and globally; the statement also explained the reasoning behind the decision to declare a PHEIC and outlined the EC's recommendations.

31 January 2020

WHO's Regional Director for Africa sent out a guidance note to all countries in the Region emphasising the importance of [readiness and early detection of cases](#).

2 February 2020

First dispatch of RT-PCR lab diagnostic kits shipped to WHO Regional Offices.

3 February 2020

WHO finalised its [Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#) (SPRP), centred on improving capacity to detect, prepare and respond to the outbreak. The SPRP translated what had been learned about the virus at that stage into strategic action to guide the development of national and regional operational plans. Its content is structured around how to rapidly establish international coordination, scale up country preparedness and response operations, and accelerate research and innovation.

4 February 2020

The WHO Director-General asked the UN Secretary-General to activate the UN crisis management policy, which held its [first meeting](#) on 11 February.

During the 146th Executive Board, WHO held a technical briefing on the novel coronavirus. In his [opening remarks](#), the Director-General urged Member States to prepare themselves by taking action now, saying “We have a window of opportunity. While 99% of cases are in China, in the rest of the world we only have 176 cases”.

[Responding to a question](#) at the Executive Board, the Secretariat said, “it is possible that there may be individuals who are asymptomatic that shed virus, but we need more detailed studies around this to determine how often that is happening and if this is leading to secondary transmission”.

5 February 2020

WHO's headquarters began holding daily media briefings on the novel coronavirus, the first time that WHO has held daily briefings by the Director-General or Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

9 February 2020

WHO deployed an advance team for the WHO-China Joint Mission, having received final sign-off from the People's Republic of China that day. The mission had been agreed between the Director-General and President Xi Jinping during the WHO delegation's visit to China at the end of January. The advance team completed five days of intensive preparation for the Mission, working with China's National Health Commission, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, local partners and related entities and the WHO China Country Office.

11 February 2020

WHO announced that the disease caused by the novel coronavirus would be named [COVID-19](#). Following [best practices](#), the name of the disease was chosen to avoid inaccuracy and stigma and therefore did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people.

11-12 February 2020

WHO convened a [Global Research and Innovation Forum](#) on the novel coronavirus, attended in person by more than 300 experts and funders from 48 countries, with a further 150 joining online. Participants came together to assess the level of knowledge, identify gaps and work together to accelerate and fund priority research, with equitable access as a fundamental principle underpinning this work.

Topics covered by the Forum included: the origin of the virus, natural history, transmission, diagnosis; epidemiological studies; clinical characterization and management; infection

prevention and control; R&D for candidate therapeutics and vaccines; ethical considerations for research; and the integration of the social sciences into the outbreak response.

The Forum was convened in line with the [WHO R&D Blueprint](#), which was activated to accelerate diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics for this novel coronavirus.

12 February 2020

Supplementing the SPRP with further detail, WHO published [Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response](#), structured around the eight pillars of country-level coordination, planning, and monitoring; risk communication and community engagement; surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation; points of entry; national laboratories; infection prevention and control; case management; and operational support and logistics. These guidelines operationalised technical guidance, such as that published on 10-12 January.

13 February 2020

WHO's Digital Solutions Unit convened a roundtable of 30 companies in Silicon Valley to help build support for WHO to keep people safe and informed about COVID-19.

14 February 2020

Based on lessons learned from the H1N1 and Ebola outbreaks, WHO finalised [guidelines](#) for organizers of mass gatherings, in light of COVID-19.

15 February 2020

The Director-General spoke at the Munich Security Conference, a global forum dedicated to issues of international security, including health security, where he also held several bilateral meetings

In his [speech](#), the Director-General made three requests of the international community: use the window of opportunity to intensify preparedness, adopt a whole-of-government approach and be guided by solidarity, not stigma. He also expressed concern at the global lack of urgency in funding the response.

16 February 2020

The WHO-China Joint Mission began its work. As part of the mission to assess the seriousness of this new disease; its transmission dynamics; and the nature and impact of China's control measures, teams made field visits to Beijing, Guangdong, Sichuan and Wuhan.

The Mission consisted of 25 national and international experts from the People's Republic of

China, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore, the United States of America and WHO, all selected after broad consultation to secure the best talent from a diversity of geographies and specialties. It was led by a Senior Advisor to the WHO Director-General, with the Head of Expert Panel of COVID-19 Response at the China National Health Commission (NHC) as co-lead.

Throughout the global outbreak, WHO has regularly sent missions to countries to learn from and support responses, at the request of the affected Member State. Particularly in the early stages of the worldwide COVID-19 response, [missions](#) went to countries facing relatively high levels of community transmission, such as the [Islamic Republic of Iran](#), Italy, and [Spain](#).

19 February 2020

Weekly WHO Member State Briefings on COVID-19 [began](#), to share the latest knowledge and insights on COVID-19.

21 February 2020

The WHO Director-General [appointed](#) six special envoys on COVID-19, to provide strategic advice and high-level political advocacy and engagement in different parts of the world:

- Professor Dr Maha El Rabbat, former Minister of Health of Egypt;
- Dr David Nabarro, former special adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- Dr John Nkengasong, Director of the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Dr Mirta Roses, former Director of the WHO Region of the Americas;
- Dr Shin Young-soo, former Regional Director of the WHO Region of the Western Pacific;
- Professor Samba Sow, Director-General of the Center for Vaccine Development in Mali.

24 February 2020

The Team Leaders of the WHO-China Joint Mission on COVID-19 held a [press conference](#) to report on the main findings of the mission.

The Mission warned that "much of the global community is not yet ready, in mindset and materially, to implement the measures that have been employed to contain COVID-19 in China".

The Mission stressed that "to reduce COVID-19 illness and death, near-term readiness planning must embrace the large-scale implementation of high-quality, non-pharmaceutical public health measures", such as case detection and isolation, contact tracing and monitoring/quarantining and community engagement.

Major recommendations were developed for the People's Republic of China, countries with

imported cases and/or outbreaks of COVID-19, uninfected countries, the public and the international community. For example, in addition to the above, countries with imported cases and/or outbreaks were recommended to "immediately activate the highest level of national Response Management protocols to ensure the all-of-government and all-of-society approach needed to contain COVID-19".

Success was presented as dependent on fast decision-making by top leaders, operational thoroughness by public health systems and societal engagement.

In addition to the Mission press conference, WHO published [operational considerations](#) for managing COVID-19 cases and outbreaks on board ships, following the outbreak of COVID-19 during an international voyage.

25 February 2020

[Confirmation of the second case in WHO's African Region](#), in Algeria. This followed the earlier reporting of a case in Egypt, the first on the African continent. The Regional Director for Africa called for countries to step up their readiness.

27 February 2020

WHO published [guidance](#) on the rational use of personal protective equipment, in view of global shortages. This provided recommendations on the type of personal protective equipment to use depending on the setting, personnel and type of activity.

28 February 2020

The [Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission](#) was issued, as a reference point for countries on measures needed to contain COVID-19.

29 February 2020

WHO published [considerations](#) for the quarantine of individuals in the context of containment for COVID-19. This described who should be quarantined and the minimum conditions for quarantine to avoid the risk of further transmission.

3 March 2020

WHO issued a [call](#) for industry and governments to increase manufacturing by 40 per cent to meet rising global demand in response to the shortage of personal protective equipment endangering health workers worldwide.

This call fits within a broader scope of ongoing engagement with industry, through WHO's [EPI-](#)

[WIN network](#) and via partners, such as the [International Chamber of Commerce](#) and World Economic Forum, the latter of which has supported COVID-19 media briefings at the regional level.

6 March 2020

WHO published the [Global Research Roadmap](#) for the novel coronavirus developed by the working groups of the Research Forum.

The Roadmap outlines key research priorities in nine key areas. These include the natural history of the virus, epidemiology, diagnostics, clinical management, ethical considerations and social sciences, as well as longer-term goals for therapeutics and vaccines.

7 March 2020

To mark the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases surpassing 100 000 globally, WHO issued a [statement](#) calling for action to stop, contain, control, delay and reduce the impact of the virus at every opportunity.

WHO issued a consolidated package of existing [guidance](#) covering the preparedness, readiness and response actions for four different transmission scenarios: no cases, sporadic cases, clusters of cases and community transmission.

9 March 2020

The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, an independent high-level body established by WHO and the World Bank, responsible for monitoring global preparedness for health emergencies, [called for an immediate injection of US\\$8 billion for the COVID-19 response](#) to: support WHO to coordinate and prioritize support efforts to the most vulnerable countries; develop new diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines; strengthen unmet needs for regional surveillance and coordination; and to ensure sufficient supplies of protective equipment for health workers.

10 March 2020

WHO, UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) issued [guidance](#) outlining critical considerations and practical checklists to keep schools safe, with tips for parents and caregivers, as well as children and students themselves.

11 March 2020

Deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels

of inaction, [WHO made the assessment](#) that COVID-19 could be characterized as a pandemic.

Speaking at the [COVID-19 media briefing](#), the Director-General highlighted how WHO had been in full response mode since being notified of the first cases and "called every day for countries to take urgent and aggressive action".

Recognising that COVID-19 was not just a public health crisis but one that would touch every sector, he restated WHO's call – made from the beginning – for countries to take a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, built around a comprehensive strategy to prevent infections, save lives and minimize impact.

Emphasising that "we cannot say this loudly enough, or clearly enough, or often enough", he stressed that "all countries can still change the course of this pandemic" if they "detect, test, treat, isolate, trace, and mobilize their people in the response".

He stressed that "the challenge for many countries who are now dealing with large clusters or community transmission is not whether they can do the same – it's whether they will".

13 March 2020

The Director-General [said](#) that Europe had become the epicentre of the pandemic with more reported cases and deaths than the rest of the world combined, apart from the People's Republic of China.

WHO, the UN Foundation and partners launched the [COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund](#) to receive donations from private individuals, corporations and institutions. In [just 10 days](#), the Fund raised more than US\$70 million, from more than 187,000 individuals and organizations, to help health workers on the front lines to do their life-saving work, treat patients and advance research for treatments and vaccines.

16 March 2020

WHO launched the [COVID-19 Partners Platform](#) as an enabling tool for all countries, implementing partners, donors and contributors to collaborate in the global COVID-19 response. The Partners Platform features real-time tracking to support the planning, implementation and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities.

17 March 2020

WHO, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) published guidance on [scaling-up COVID-19 outbreak readiness and response operations in camps and camp-like settings](#).

18 March 2020

WHO and partners launched the [Solidarity trial](#), an international clinical trial that aims to generate robust data from around the world to find the most effective treatments for COVID-19.

While randomized clinical trials normally take years to design and conduct, the Solidarity trial was designed to accelerate this process. Enrolling patients in one single randomized trial was to help facilitate the rapid worldwide comparison of unproven treatments. This arrangement was also to overcome the risk of multiple small trials not generating the strong evidence needed to determine the relative effectiveness of potential treatments.

WHO published [guidance](#) on mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak.

20 March 2020

WHO Health Alert, which offers instant and accurate information about COVID-19, [launched](#) on WhatsApp. It is available in multiple languages with users around the world.

21 March 2020

In light of many Member States facing shortfalls in testing capacity, WHO published laboratory testing strategy [recommendations](#) for COVID-19.

23 March 2020

WHO and FIFA [launched](#) the 'Pass the message to kick out coronavirus' awareness campaign, led by world-renowned footballers, who called on people around the world to protect their health, through hand washing, coughing etiquette, not touching one's face, maintaining physical distance and staying home if feeling unwell.

25 March 2020

The UN [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) was launched by the WHO Director-General, UN Secretary-General, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and UNICEF Executive Director.

WHO also updated its [operational planning guidelines](#) to help countries balance the demands of responding directly to COVID-19 while maintaining essential health service delivery, protecting health care workers and mitigating the risk of system collapse.

26 March 2020

The Director-General [addressed](#) the Extraordinary G20 Summit on COVID-19, chaired by King Salman of Saudi Arabia, [and called on G20 leaders to fight, unite, and ignite against](#) COVID-19.

In the opening of their [Statement](#) for the Summit, the G20 Leaders said they were "committed to do whatever it takes to overcome the pandemic, along with the World Health Organization (WHO)". They also stated they would "strengthen health systems globally, including through supporting the full implementation of the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)".

The Statement went on to outline that the Leaders "fully support and commit to further strengthen the WHO's mandate in coordinating the international fight against the pandemic, including the protection of front-line health workers, delivery of medical supplies, especially diagnostic tools, treatments, medicines, and vaccines".

The Leaders said they would "quickly work together and with stakeholders to close the financing gap in the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan" and also committed to "provide immediate resources to the WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund", calling upon all countries, international organizations, the private sector, philanthropies, and individuals to contribute to these efforts.

Aside from the G20, WHO joined with UNESCO and other partners to launch the [Global Education Coalition](#) to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children and youth during this period of sudden and unprecedented educational disruption.

28 March 2020

With many health facilities around the world overwhelmed by the influx of COVID-19 patients seeking medical care, WHO published a [manual](#) on how to set up and manage a severe acute respiratory infection treatment centre and a severe acute respiratory infection screening facility in health care facilities to optimise patient care.

30 March 2020

The Director-General [called on](#) countries to work with companies to increase production; to ensure the free movement of essential health products; and to ensure equitable distribution, having spoken to G20 trade ministers about ways to address chronic shortages earlier in the day.

At this point, WHO had [shipped](#) almost 2 million individual items of protective gear to 74 countries that needed them most and was working intensively with several partners to massively increase access to life-saving products, including diagnostics, personal protective equipment, medical oxygen, ventilators and more.

31 March 2020

WHO issued a [Medical Product Alert](#) warning consumers, healthcare professionals, and health authorities against a growing number of falsified medical products that claim to prevent, detect, treat or cure COVID-19.

WHO published a [Scientific Brief](#) on the off-label use of medicines for COVID-19, addressing the issue of compassionate use.

WHO [announced](#) the launch of a chatbot with Rakuten Viber, a free messaging and calling app. Subscribers to the WHO Viber chatbot receive notifications with the latest news and information directly from WHO. It is available in multiple languages with users around the world.

2 April 2020

WHO [reported](#) on evidence of transmission from symptomatic, pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic people infected with COVID-19, noting that transmission from a pre-symptomatic case can occur before symptom onset.

4 April 2020

WHO [reported](#) that over 1 million cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed worldwide, a more than tenfold increase in less than a month.

6 April 2020

WHO issued updated [guidance](#) on masks, including a new section on advice to decision-makers on mask use by healthy people in communities.

7 April 2020

[World Health Day](#) focused on celebrating the work of nurses and midwives at the forefront of the COVID-19 response.

WHO issued a [document](#) outlining what the health sector/system can do to address COVID-19 and violence against women.

WHO finalised [practical considerations](#) for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of COVID-19.

8 April 2020

The UN COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force was [launched](#) to coordinate and scale up the procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment, lab diagnostics and oxygen to the

countries most in need.

9 April 2020

WHO marked 100 days since the first cases of ‘pneumonia with unknown cause’ were reported with an [overview](#) of key events and efforts taken to stop the spread of coronavirus.

11 April 2020

WHO published a [draft landscape](#) of COVID-19 candidate vaccines, on the basis of a systematic assessment of candidates from around the world, which continues to be [updated](#).

13 April 2020

WHO published a [statement](#) by 130 scientists, funders and manufacturers from around the world, in which they committed to working with WHO to speed the development of a vaccine against COVID-19.

14 April 2020

WHO published a [COVID-19 strategy update](#), with guidance for countries preparing for a phased transition from widespread transmission to a steady state of low-level or no transmission. It aims for all countries to control the pandemic by mobilizing all sectors and communities to prevent and suppress community transmission, reduce mortality and develop safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics.

The first WHO and World Food Programme ‘[Solidarity Flight](#)’, organised with partners, departed from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, carrying vital medical cargo for countries in Africa,

WHO [launched a Facebook Messenger chatbot version](#) of its WHO Health Alert platform – offering instant, accurate and multilingual information and guidance to keep users safe from COVID-19.

15 April 2020

WHO finalised [guidance](#) on public health advice for social and religious practices during Ramadan, in the context of COVID-19.

16 April 2020

WHO issued [guidance](#) on considerations in adjusting public health and social measures, such as large-scale movement restrictions, commonly referred to as ‘lockdowns’.

18 April 2020

WHO and Global Citizen co-hosted the '[One World: Together At Home](#)' concert, a global on-air special to celebrate and support front line healthcare workers. The concert [raised a total of \\$127.9 million](#), providing \$55.1 million to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and \$72.8 million to local and regional responders.

19 April 2020

Together with 14 other humanitarian organizations, WHO issued [a call to the donor community](#) to urgently support the global emergency supply system to fight COVID-19.

20 April 2020

The UN General Assembly adopted a [resolution](#) entitled 'International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19'. The resolution "acknowledges the crucial leading role played by the World Health Organization" with regard to "coordinating the global response to control and contain the spread" of COVID-19. It also requested "close collaboration" with WHO by the UN Secretary-General.

24 April 2020

In a virtual event co-hosted by WHO, President Emmanuel Macron of France, President Ursula Von der Leyen of the European Commission and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Director-General [launched](#) the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, or [ACT-Accelerator](#), a collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19.

WHO issued a [Scientific Brief](#) on 'immunity passports' in the context of COVID-19. This brief highlighted that there was not enough evidence about the effectiveness of antibody-mediated immunity to guarantee the accuracy of an 'immunity passport' or 'risk-free certificate' and that the use of such certificates may therefore increase the risks of continued transmission.

30 April 2020

The Director-General convened the IHR Emergency Committee on COVID-19 for a third time, with an expanded membership to reflect the nature of the pandemic and the need to include additional areas of expertise. The Emergency Committee met on 30 April and issued its [statement](#) on 1 May.

The Director-General declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 continued to constitute a PHEIC. He accepted the advice of the Committee to WHO and issued the Committee's advice to States

Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR.

In his [opening remarks](#) at the 1 May media briefing on COVID-19, the Director-General spoke about the EC's advice for WHO and outlined how the organization would continue to lead and coordinate the global response to the pandemic, in collaboration with countries and partners.

The Director-General accepted the Committee's advice that "WHO works to identify the animal source of the virus through international scientific and collaborative missions".

Among other commitments, he said that WHO would "continue to call on countries to implement a comprehensive package of measures to find, isolate, test and treat every case, and trace every contact", as it had "done clearly from the beginning".

4 May 2020

The Director-General [addressed](#) leaders from 40 countries from all over the world at a COVID-19 Global Response International Pledging Event, hosted by the European Commission. The Director-General highlighted that the ACT Accelerator represented a "unique commitment to work together at record speed to develop essential tools to prevent, detect and treat COVID-19". He went on to emphasise that the "ultimate measure of success" would be how equally these tools were distributed, as part of ensuring health for all.

5 May 2020

WHO launched the COVID-19 Supply Portal, a purpose-built tool to facilitate and consolidate submission of supply requests from national authorities and all implementing partners supporting COVID-19 National Action Plans. The Portal is accessed via the [COVID-19 Partners Platform](#).

7 May 2020

The UN launched an [update to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) for \$6.7 billion to minimise the most debilitating effects of the pandemic in 63 low and middle-income countries.

10 May 2020

Building on previous [guidance](#) on the investigation of cases and clusters, WHO issued interim [guidance](#) on contact tracing.

10-14 May 2020

With Member States facing different transmission scenarios, WHO published four annexes to the

considerations in adjusting public health and social measures for [workplaces](#), [schools](#) and [mass gatherings](#), as well as the public health criteria to adjust these measures.

13 May 2020

Designed to inform health care workers to help them care for COVID-19 patients and protect themselves, the [WHO Academy App launched](#), together with the WHO Info app for the general public.

14 May 2020

WHO issued an [advocacy brief](#) advising countries to incorporate a focus on gender into their COVID-19 responses, in order to ensure that public health policies and measures to curb the pandemic account for gender and how it interacts with other inequalities.

15 May 2020

WHO released a [Scientific Brief](#) on multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19.

18 May 2020

The Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (IOAC) – which continuously reviews WHO’s work in health emergencies – finalised and published its [interim report](#) on WHO’s response to COVID-19 from January to April 2020. This report sits within WHO’s existing independent accountability mechanisms, in operation since the pandemic started.

The Committee was alerted to the cluster of cases in Wuhan on 2 January and WHO has provided regular updates to the Committee since 6 January. The Committee held its first teleconference on the WHO response to COVID-19 on 20 January and began drafting its interim report on 30 March. IOAC continues to review the work of WHO on the COVID-19 pandemic and will report to the next meeting of WHO governing bodies.

18-19 May 2020

The 73rd [World Health Assembly](#), the first ever to be held virtually, adopted a landmark [resolution](#) to bring the world together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, co-sponsored by more than 130 countries – the largest number on record – and adopted by consensus. Fourteen heads of state participated in the [opening](#) and [closing](#) sessions.

The resolution calls for the intensification of efforts to control the pandemic, and “recognizes the

role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health", and calls for equitable access to and fair distribution of all essential health technologies and products to combat the virus. It takes stock of the pandemic's "disproportionately heavy impact on the poor and the most vulnerable", addressing not just health but also the wider impact on economies and societies and the "exacerbation of inequalities within and between countries".

The resolution calls on Member States to take several actions including to provide WHO both with "sustainable funding" and "timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as required by the International Health Regulations (2005)". It also requests the Director-General, working with other organizations and countries, "to identify the zoonotic source of the virus and the route of introduction to the human population".

The resolution concludes with a request to the Director-General to initiate an impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation of the response to COVID-19, at the earliest appropriate moment and in consultation with Member States, in order to review experience and lessons learned and to make recommendations to improve capacity for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and to report on the implementation of the resolution at the 74th World Health Assembly.

In his [opening remarks](#), the Director-General urged countries to "proceed with caution" to secure the "fastest possible global recovery". He reiterated the importance of a comprehensive approach and a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response, with special attention to vulnerable groups.

Highlighting that the world "needs to strengthen, implement and finance the systems and organizations it has – including WHO", the Director-General placed special emphasis on investing in "the global treaty that underpins global health security: the International Health Regulations".

In his [closing remarks](#), the Director-General outlined how WHO was fighting the pandemic with every tool at its disposal and said "Let our shared humanity be the antidote to our shared threat".

21 May 2020

WHO signed a [new agreement](#) with the UN Refugee Agency, with a key aim for 2020 of supporting ongoing efforts to protect some 70 million forcibly displaced people from COVID-19.

26 May 2020

A [civil society town hall](#) with the Director-General took place, which brought together over 130 civil society leaders from across 33 countries to discuss the role of civil society in the COVID-19 response. This session was organized with the Global Health Council.

27 May 2020

The [WHO Foundation](#) was [established](#), with the aim of supporting global public health needs by providing funds to WHO and trusted partners. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO Foundation will initially focus on emergencies and pandemic response. By facilitating contributions from the general public, individual major donors and corporate partners, the Foundation will drive work towards securing more sustainable and predictable funding for WHO, drawn from a broader donor base.

29 May 2020

Thirty countries and multiple international partners and institutions launched the [COVID-19 Technology Access Pool](#) (C-TAP), an initiative to make vaccines, tests, treatments and other health technologies to fight COVID-19 accessible to all. Voluntary and based on social solidarity, C-TAP aims to provide a one-stop shop for equitably sharing scientific knowledge, data and intellectual property.

Heads of government and leaders from across the UN, academia, industry and civil society spoke at the launch event for C-TAP, an initiative first proposed in March by President Carlos Alvarado of Costa Rica. WHO, Costa Rica and all the co-sponsor countries also issued a '[Solidarity Call to Action](#)' asking stakeholders to join and support the initiative, with recommended actions for key groups.

2 June 2020

The Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme [addressed](#) the Yemen High-level Pledging Conference, organised to support the humanitarian response and alleviate suffering in the country. The Executive Director [said](#) that COVID-19 was placing a major burden on the health system, already on the verge of collapse, and that a "massive scale-up of our COVID and non-COVID health operations" was needed, despite the considerable efforts of WHO and partners.

4 June 2020

WHO [welcomed](#) funding commitments made at the Global Vaccine Summit. Hosted virtually by the UK government, this was Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's, third pledging conference. These commitments will help maintain immunization in lower-income countries, mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Summit also highlighted how important a safe, effective and equitably accessible vaccine will be in controlling COVID-19.

5 June 2020

WHO published updated [guidance](#) on the use of masks for the control of COVID-19, which provided [updated advice](#) on who should wear a mask, when it should be worn and what it should be made of.

13 June 2020

WHO [reported](#) that Chinese authorities had provided information on a cluster of COVID-19 cases in Beijing, People's Republic of China.

Officials from the National Health Commission and Beijing Health Commission briefed WHO's China country office, to share details of preliminary investigations ongoing in Beijing.

WHO offered support and technical assistance, as well as requested further information about the cluster and the investigations underway and planned.

16 June 2020

WHO [welcomed](#) initial clinical trial results from the UK that showed dexamethasone, a corticosteroid, could be lifesaving for patients critically ill with COVID-19. The news built off the Global [Research and Innovation Forum](#), which took place in Geneva in mid-February, to accelerate health technologies for COVID-19. The Forum highlighted further research into the use of steroids as a priority.

17 June 2020

WHO [announced](#) that the hydroxychloroquine arm of the [Solidarity Trial](#) to find an effective COVID-19 treatment was being stopped. The decision was based on large scale randomized evidence from the Solidarity, Discovery and Recovery trials, as well as a review of available published evidence from other sources, which showed that hydroxychloroquine did not reduce mortality for hospitalised COVID-19 patients.

26 June 2020

The [ACT-Accelerator published](#) its consolidated [investment case](#), calling for \$31.3 billion over the next 12 months for diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. A [press conference](#) detailed the ACT-Accelerator's four pillars of work: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines and the health system connector, in addition to the cross-cutting workstream on Access and Allocation.

29 June 2020

WHO's first [infodemiology conference](#) began, as part of the organization's work on new evidence-based measures and practices to prevent, detect and respond to mis- and disinformation.

'Infodemiology' is the science of managing 'infodemics': the overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – occurring during an epidemic.

1-2 July 2020

WHO held its [second summit](#) on COVID-19 research and innovation, to take stock of the evolving science on COVID-19 and examine progress in developing effective health tools. The virtual summit hosted over 1000 researchers and scientists from all over the world.

One of the outcomes was agreement that more trials were needed to test antivirals, immunomodulatory drugs and anti-thrombotic agents, as well as combination therapies, at different stages of the disease. The discussion of vaccine candidates covered the use of a global, multi country, adaptive trial design, with a common Data and Safety Monitoring Board, and clear criteria to advance candidates through the various stages of trials.

4 July 2020

WHO announced that the hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir/ritonavir arms of the [Solidarity trial](#) to find an effective COVID-19 treatment were being [discontinued](#), building on the decision to [stop](#) the hydroxychloroquine arm on 17 June 2020. The decision was based on evidence from the Solidarity trial interim results and from a review of the evidence from all trials presented at the 1-2 July WHO Summit on COVID-19 research and innovation.

6 July 2020

WHO [shared](#) survey findings, showing that seventy-three countries have warned that they are at risk of stock-outs of antiretroviral (ARV) medicines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-four countries reported having either a critically low stock of ARVs or disruptions in the supply of these life-saving medicines.

8 July 2020

The Director-General participated in a WHO webinar with civil society organizations to discuss how to engage them in COVID-19 responses at the national and local levels, with a stated plan of future events on these issues.

9 July 2020

The WHO Director-General [announced](#) the co-chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to evaluate the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This announcement was a response to the [request](#) in a [landmark resolution](#) adopted by the World Health Assembly in May, which called on WHO to initiate an independent and

comprehensive evaluation of the lessons learned from the international health response to COVID-19.

In [remarks](#) to WHO Member States, the Director-General said the Panel will be co-chaired by former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. In the past, WHO's internal evaluation department would serve as a secretariat in independent evaluations but the Director-General proposed an independent secretariat fully accountable to the two co-chairs and the panel, due to the unique situation.

WHO issued an updated Scientific Brief on [COVID-19 transmission](#), providing information on how, when and in which settings the virus spreads between people. The brief described possible modes of transmission, including contact, droplet, airborne, fomite, fecal-oral, bloodborne, mother-to-child, and animal-to-human transmission.

10 July 2020

Launch of the [Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco](#), which provides free access to nicotine replacement therapy and to Florence, a digital health worker, based on artificial intelligence that dispels myths around COVID-19 and tobacco and helps people develop a personalized plan to quit tobacco.

To develop the scope and terms of reference for a WHO-led international mission, [WHO experts departed for China](#) to work together with their Chinese counterparts to prepare scientific plans for identifying the zoonotic source of COVID-19. The mission objective is to advance the understanding of animal hosts for COVID-19 and ascertain how the disease jumped between animals and humans.

13 July 2020

The 2020 edition of the UN's '[State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#)' is published, which forecasted that the COVID-19 pandemic could tip over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of the year.

15 July 2020

The COVAX Facility, a mechanism designed to guarantee rapid, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, secured engagement from [more than 150 countries](#), representing over 60% of the world's population.

Seventy-five countries have expressed interest in financing the vaccines from their own public finance budgets and partnering with up to 90 lower-income countries that could be supported through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

The COVAX Facility forms a key part of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator's

vaccines pillar, which is co-led by WHO.

17 July 2020

The WHO Director-General held a [press conference](#) with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, marking the release of the [updated Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19](#) for \$10.3 billion to fight the virus in low-income and fragile countries.

22 July 2020

WHO, the United Nations Development Programme and Georgetown University [launched](#) the [COVID-19 Law Lab](#), a database of laws implemented in over 190 countries in response to the pandemic. The initiative's goal is to ensure that laws protect health and wellbeing, while adhering to international human rights standards.

24 July 2020

WHO issued a [policy brief](#) to prevent and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 across all aspects of long-term care, including home- and community-based care. The brief's 11 policy objectives and key action points are summarized in an accompanying [annex](#).

25 July 2020

WHO published interim [guidance](#) on safe Eid al Adha practices in the context of COVID-19, which highlights public health advice for social gatherings and religious practices that can be applied across different national contexts.

27 July 2020

WHO marked [World Hepatitis Day](#), highlighting results from a modelling study conducted in collaboration with Imperial College London. The study looked at potential disruptions to the hepatitis B (HBV) vaccination programme due to the pandemic. Under a worst case scenario, there would be a projected 5.3 million additional chronic HBV infections among children born between 2020 and 2030 and 1 million additional HBV-related deaths among those children later on.

31 July 2020

The Director-General [convened](#) the IHR Emergency Committee on COVID-19 (EC) for a fourth time. The EC met on 31 July and issued its [statement](#) on 1 August.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the pandemic still constitutes a public health emergency

of international concern (PHEIC) and offered advice to the Director-General.

The Director-General declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 continues to constitute a PHEIC. He accepted the advice of the Committee to WHO and issued the Committee's advice to States Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR (2005).

The Committee put forward a number of recommendations for countries to continue to implement to bring the virus under control. These ranged from sharing best practice, to enhancing political commitment and leadership for national strategies and localized response activities driven by science, data, and experience.

It was also recommended that countries engage in the [ACT-Accelerator](#), participate in relevant clinical trials, and prepare for safe and effective therapeutics and vaccine introduction.

In his opening remarks at the 3 August [media briefing](#) on COVID-19, the Director-General spoke about how the Committee "acknowledged that Member States have tough choices to make" but were "also clear that when leaders step up and work intensely with their populations, this disease can be brought under control".

3 August 2020

WHO published its [COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Progress Report](#), covering progress from 1 February up to 30 June 2020 in scaling up international coordination and support and country preparedness, as well as accelerating research and innovation. The report also discussed key challenges and updated on the resource requirements for the next phase of WHO's response.

5 August 2020

The Director-General launched the [#WearAMask challenge](#) on social media to help spread the word about how and when to use a mask to protect against COVID-19. This campaign, involving a wide range of partners, is part of WHO's wider call to take a comprehensive "do it all" response to the pandemic.

A plane carrying 20 tonnes of WHO health supplies [landed](#) in Beirut, Lebanon, to support the treatment of patients injured by the massive blast that occurred in the city on 4 August, within the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, recent civil unrest, a major economic crisis and heavy refugee burden.

6 August 2020

WHO hosted its regular COVID-19 [media briefing](#) in partnership with the Aspen Security Forum, with the Director-General highlighting the critical importance of health investment to national

security, emphasising that "no country will be safe, until we're all safe".

WHO published two new documents on the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, outlining [global procurement for COVID-19 vaccines](#) and focusing on [insuring accelerated vaccine development and manufacturing](#).

The COVAX Facility enables countries to benefit from a portfolio of vaccine candidates so that their populations can have early access to effective vaccines. The Facility is being developed through the [COVAX Pillar](#) of the [ACT-Accelerator](#), which is being worked on by WHO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) together with multinational and developing country vaccine manufacturers.

7 August 2020

WHO published updated [guidance](#) on public health surveillance for COVID-19, which includes revised suspected and probable case definitions that integrate new knowledge about the clinical spectrum of COVID-19 and its transmission.

12 August 2020

WHO published updated [guidance](#) on home care for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and management of their contacts.

14 August 2020

WHO, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) issued a [statement](#) calling on governments to ensure that the procurement and supply of controlled medicines in countries meet the needs of patients, both those who have COVID-19 and those who require internationally controlled medicines for other medical conditions.

19 August 2020

On [World Humanitarian Day](#), WHO joined with UN partners to pay tribute to the frontline workers around the world responding to COVID-19 and other health emergencies. [These #RealLifeHeroes](#) include refugees who as health workers are playing essential roles in the pandemic response; Ebola health workers who are stepping in to fight COVID-19; and doctors and nurses who continue to provide critical health care to women and children.

21 August 2020

WHO, in collaboration with UNICEF, published [guidance](#) on the use of masks for children in the

community in the context of COVID-19.

27 August 2020

Speaking at a [Member State Briefing](#), the Director-General announced his plan to establish a Review Committee on the functioning of the IHR during COVID-19.

This Committee will advise the Director-General on whether any changes to the IHR may be necessary to ensure this powerful tool of international law is as effective as possible. It has been established in accordance with the IHR and a landmark [resolution](#) adopted by the World Health Assembly in May, which called on WHO to initiate an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the lessons learned from the international health response to COVID-19.

28 August 2020

WHO launched its '[Science in 5](#)' video and podcast series, featuring WHO experts giving explanations of the science on specific issues related to COVID-19, to help audiences protect themselves and others.

In the [first episode](#), WHO's Chief Scientist explained the concept of 'herd immunity'.

31 August 2020

WHO [published](#) a first indicative [survey](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on health systems based on 105 countries' reports. Almost every country (90%) experienced disruption to its health services, with low- and middle-income countries reporting the greatest difficulties.

The Director-General [announced](#) an [appeal](#) for at US\$76 million for Lebanon, following the 4 August Beirut port blast. The appeal will support WHO's work to provide follow-up care for the injured, ensure access to services, provide mental health support, rebuild destroyed hospitals and control COVID-19 through expanding testing and treatment, buying urgently needed medicines and protecting health care workers.

1 September 2020

Following a town hall meeting in May and a webinar in July with civil society, the first session in a series of COVID-19 related 'civil society dialogue' meetings with the Director-General took place; it focused on achieving a gender transformative COVID-19 response. The session was organized and co-hosted by WHO, together with GENDRO and Women in Global Health.

2 September 2020

WHO published [guidance](#) on the role of corticosteroids in treating COVID-19, developed in

collaboration with the non-profit Magic Evidence Ecosystem Foundation (MAGIC).

8-9 September 2020

The [Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations \(2005\) \(IHR\) during the COVID-19 Response](#) began its work to evaluate the functioning of the IHR during the pandemic and recommend any changes it believes are necessary. The Review Committee was convened by the Director-General in line with the [landmark resolution](#) adopted at the 73rd World Health Assembly.

10 September 2020

The Director-General and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission co-hosted the [inaugural meeting](#) of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council. The meeting was co-chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway.

Global leaders, including over 30 heads of state and ministers, [committed](#) to: provide sustained political leadership, advocate in support of the [ACT-Accelerator Investment Case](#) and work to ensure that all countries and populations have early, affordable and equitable access to the new vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics the [ACT-Accelerator](#) is pursuing.

11 September 2020

WHO published [interim guidance](#), highlighting the value of antigen based rapid diagnostic tests for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, in areas where community transmission is widespread and where nucleic acid amplification-based diagnostic testing is either unavailable or where test results are significantly delayed.

14 September 2020

The [Global Preparedness Monitoring Board](#) (GPMB) – an independent monitoring and accountability body to ensure preparedness for global health crises – issued its '[The World in Disorder](#)' report.

To strengthen the current response to COVID-19 and better prepare the world for future pandemics and health emergencies, the report called for responsible leadership; engaged citizenship; strong and agile systems for health security; sustained investment; and robust global governance of preparedness.

The GPMB was co-convened by WHO and the World Bank Group and formally launched in May 2018. Its co-chairs are [Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), former Prime Minister of Norway and former

WHO Director-General, and [Elhadj As Sy](#), Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation Board and former Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Endorsed by its [Strategic Advisory Group of Experts](#) (SAGE) on Immunization, WHO issued a [Values Framework](#) offering guidance on the allocation of COVID-19 vaccines between countries and on the prioritization of groups for vaccination within countries, while supply is limited.

15 September 2020 – 2 October 2020

At the unprecedented virtual [high-level session of the 75th UN General Assembly](#), WHO [called for](#): world leaders to support the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT)-Accelerator, maintaining momentum towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and preparing for the next pandemic together, now. WHO sessions covered topics such as: [mitigating the impact of COVID-19](#) on future generations, [stopping the spread of harmful misinformation](#) and [better emergency preparedness](#).

17 September 2020

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) held its [first meeting](#).

The Panel agreed to focus on three main themes of enquiry: an analysis and vision for a strengthened international system ideally equipped for pandemic preparedness and response; a review of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic from the initial phase through to the present, including the global alerts, the spread, country responses and wide societal impact; and lessons to be learnt in why SARS-CoV-2 spread globally and had its devastating impact, including an understanding of characteristics of the virus and of governmental and institutional responses at all levels.

With health workers exposed to unprecedented risk from COVID-19, WHO [released](#) a [Charter](#) on [World Patient Safety Day](#), calling for steps to protect health workers from violence; to improve their mental health; to protect them from physical and biological hazards; to advance national programmes for health worker safety; and to connect health worker safety policies to existing patient safety policies.

21 September 2020

WHO's [Strategic Advisory Group of Experts](#) (SAGE) on Immunization provided [interim guidance](#) for influenza vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of this date, 64 higher income economies had [joined](#) the [COVAX Facility](#), a global initiative bringing together governments and manufacturers to ensure eventual COVID-19 vaccines reach

those in greatest need, whoever they are and wherever they live. Commitments came from 35 economies, as well as the European Commission which said it would [procure doses](#) on behalf of 27 EU member states plus Norway and Iceland.

By this date, 156 economies, representing roughly 64% of the global population in total, had either committed to or were eligible for the COVAX Facility.

22 September 2020

WHO issued the first [Emergency Use Listing](#) for a quality antigen based rapid diagnostic test for detecting the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19.

23 September 2020

WHO issued a [joint statement](#) with UN partners and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) calling for action on managing the COVID-19 'infodemic' of an overabundance of information, both online and offline.

24 September 2020

The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator) published its [economic investment case and financing requirements](#), covering September 2020 through to December 2021.

28 September 2020

WHO joined with partners to make [120 million affordable, quality COVID-19 rapid tests available](#) for low- and middle-income countries.

30 September 2020

The UN and partners welcomed [nearly US\\$1 billion in new financing](#) for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, from governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations.

1 October 2020

WHO published a [call for expressions of interest](#) for manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines – to apply for approval for prequalification and/or Emergency Use Listing.

5 October 2020

WHO [shared](#) survey findings showing that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted

critical mental health services in 93% of the 130 countries covered, while the demand for mental health is increasing.

5-6 October 2020

An [Executive Board special session on the COVID-19 response](#) took place, which provided an [update](#) on implementation of [resolution WHA73.1](#) approved by Member States at the World Health Assembly in May 2020.

6 October 2020

The [Future is Unwritten's Healing Arts Initiative](#) was unveiled by the WHO Foundation, UN75 and Christie's, a cultural call-to-action to support a global COVID-19 response through the arts. The initiative aims to increase awareness around a global path to recovery and raise critical funds to mobilize artists and health professionals in support of communities most vulnerable, at-risk and with the weakest health systems.

13 October 2020

WHO issued a [joint statement](#) with the International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization and International Fund For Agricultural Development, calling for urgent and ambitious action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods, health and food systems. Due to the pandemic's disruptive effects, nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce are at risk of losing their livelihoods, tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty and up to 132 million people could become undernourished.

14 October 2020

WHO [releases](#) its [2020 Global Tuberculosis Report](#), highlighting significant reductions in tuberculosis case notifications but also efforts by countries to mitigate the pandemic's impact. A total of 108 countries – including 21 countries with a high tuberculosis burden – have expanded the use of digital technologies to provide remote advice and support.

15 October 2020

WHO [announced](#) conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of repurposed drugs for COVID-19. Interim results from the [Solidarity Trial](#) indicated that remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon regimens appeared to have little or no effect on 28-day mortality or the in-hospital course of COVID-19 among hospitalized patients.

19 October 2020

WHO partnered with musician Kim Sledge and social impact enterprise The World We Want to [launch](#) the [#WeAreFamily campaign](#) to inspire global solidarity for better health. Part of the proceeds from a special edition cover of the 'We Are Family' song will be donated to the [WHO Foundation](#).

22 October 2020

WHO and the Wikimedia Foundation – the nonprofit that administers Wikipedia – [announced](#) a collaboration to expand the public's access to the latest and most reliable information about COVID-19.

25-27 October 2020

At the [World Health Summit](#), the Director-General and an array of WHO leaders and experts called for increasing investment in COVID-19 innovation, research and solutions. The Summit is traditionally held under the patronage of the German Chancellor, the President of the Republic of France, the President of the European Commission, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

29 October 2020

The Director-General convened the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee (EC) on COVID-19 for a fifth time. The EC met on 29 October and issued its [statement](#) on 30 October.

The Committee considered the pandemic continues to constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) and offered advice to the Director-General.

The Director-General declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 continues to constitute a PHEIC. He accepted the advice of the Committee to WHO and issued the Committee's advice to States Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR (2005).

Reflecting on the EC in his opening remarks at the 30 October [media briefing](#) on COVID-19, the Director-General highlighted that: "The take home message is that it's important for governments and citizens to keep focused on breaking the chains of transmission. Governments should focus on tackling the virus and avoid politicisation. No matter where they are in terms of the outbreak, they should keep investing in the health system and workforce and improving testing, tracing and treatment of all cases."

The Director-General also noted that the EC "recommended that to prepare for new COVID-19 vaccines, WHO and governments must work closely to develop rollout strategies, train health workers and ensure clear communications with the general public about vaccination".

4 November 2020

The Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (IOAC) published a [report](#) on the 2016 reform of WHO's work on outbreaks and emergencies, reviewing progress made over the past four years, and identifying the lessons learned that could be useful going forward, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

5 November 2020

WHO published [terms of reference](#) for the WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2. It outlines two phases of studies: Short term studies (Phase 1) will be conducted to better understand how the virus might have started circulating in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. Building on the findings of these short-term studies, and the scientific literature, longer term studies will be developed (Phase 2).

6 November 2020

WHO issued a [Disease Outbreak News](#) report on the SARS-CoV-2 mink-associated variant strain in Denmark. The report included an overview of the Danish public health response, and WHO risk assessment and advice.

WHO and the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities issued a [joint statement](#), out of a shared commitment to ensuring that patients have access to safe and effective health products against COVID-19 as early as possible, while the existing rigorous scientific standards for the evaluation and safety monitoring of treatments and vaccines are maintained at all times.

WHO and UNICEF issued an urgent [call to action](#) to avert major measles and polio epidemics as COVID-19 continues to disrupt immunization services worldwide.

9-13 November 2020

The resumed [73rd World Health Assembly](#) took place virtually.

The WHA adopted [resolution](#) EB146.R10 to strengthen preparedness for health emergencies. The resolution [renews](#) the commitment to better prepare for health emergencies such as COVID-19, through “full” compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005).

Recognizing the dedication and sacrifice of the millions of health and care workers at the forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic, Member States unanimously designated 2021 as the [International Year of Health and Care Workers](#).

In his [opening remarks](#), the Director-General welcomed Member States interested in participating

in the pilot phase of the proposed Universal Health and Preparedness Review, a system in which countries agree to a regular and transparent process of peer review, similar to the system of universal periodic review used by the Human Rights Council. Its purpose is to build mutual trust and accountability for health, by bringing nations together as neighbours to support a whole-of-government approach to strengthening national capacities for pandemic preparedness, universal health coverage and healthier populations.

In his [closing remarks](#), the Director-General noted that the pandemic has shown “there is an urgent need for a globally agreed system for sharing pathogen materials and clinical samples, to facilitate the rapid development of medical countermeasures as global public goods.” The Director-General outlined a proposal for “a new approach that would include a repository for materials housed by WHO in a secure Swiss facility; an agreement that sharing materials into this repository is voluntary; that WHO can facilitate the transfer and use of the materials; and a set of criteria under which WHO would distribute them.”

Noting that the pandemic has “demonstrated the consequences of chronic under-investment in public health”, the Director-General also announced the [Council on the Economics of Health for All](#), chaired by Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Founding Director in the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University College London. The Council will focus on investments in health, and achieving sustainable, inclusive and innovation-led economic growth.

10 November 2020

WHO launched the ‘[We Are #InThisTogether](#)’ [campaign](#) to promote collaboration and adherence to five key measures to counter COVID-19: cleaning hands, wearing masks, coughing and sneezing safely, keeping distant and opening windows.

11-13 November 2020

The European Commission, France, Spain, the Republic of Korea and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [pledged](#) US\$360 million to COVAX, the Vaccines Pillar of the Access to COVID-19 (ACT) Accelerator, at the Paris Peace Forum. The Director-General was among speakers highlighting the essential need for multilateral action and the ACT Accelerator’s role in ending the acute phase of the pandemic as quickly as possible.

16 November 2020

The 147th session of the [Executive Board](#) resumed. In his [opening remarks](#), the Director-General welcomed encouraging news about vaccines but emphasised that “a vaccine on its own will not end the pandemic” and other public health measures would need to continue as there was “still a long road to travel”.

The Director-General co-signed a [letter](#) to the G20 Leaders with fellow champions of the Access

to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway and President Ursula Von der Leyen of the European Commission, outlining the need for an immediate investment of US\$4.5 billion for vaccines.

WHO published [interim guidance](#), developed with UNICEF, to help national governments in developing and updating their national deployment and vaccination plan for COVID-19 vaccines.

18 November 2020

The [WHO Academy](#) launched its [first augmented reality course for health workers](#) on the proper use of COVID-19 personal protective equipment.

19 November 2020

WHO updated Member States on its [research into the origins of the virus](#), including a status update on the international team's membership and work with their Chinese counterparts, publishing the [international team list](#) on 20 November 2020.

WHO and other UN agencies issued a [Joint Statement on Data Protection and Privacy in the COVID-19 Response](#), calling for the use of data and technology in the COVID-19 response in a way that respects the right to privacy under international law, data protection and privacy principles, as well as the right to health, and economic and social development.

20 November 2020

WHO published a [guideline](#) on therapeutics and COVID-19, with new information for clinicians including a conditional recommendation against the use of remdesivir in hospitalized patients with COVID-19, regardless of disease severity.

21 November 2020

The Director-General [addressed](#) the G20 Leaders' Summit, calling for action to: ensure COVID-19 vaccines are allocated fairly as global public goods; fully implement the International Health Regulations; address the vulnerabilities and inequalities at the root of the pandemic; and help fill the ACT-Accelerator's financing gaps.

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