



MEDIA ADVISORY

UN agencies drum-up attention to Africa to support governments' response to COVID-19 pandemic

WHAT: United Nations agencies in West and Central Africa will organize a **virtual press conference** to brief on the rapidly evolving situation of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the region.

The number of COVID-19 cases in the region is steadily increasing in a region already faced with serious development and humanitarian challenges. This requires heightened political attention, technical support and partnership to mobilize resources for the immediate health response as well as the social and economic impact that could affect even more people.

WHEN: 14:00 – 15:00 (GMT) - Wednesday 29TH April 2020

WHERE: Virtual Press Conference via - Zoom ([Register in advance for this meeting](#)) *After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.*

WHO: Executive Committee of Regional Directors UN Sustainable Development Group for West (R-UNSDG-WCA)

- **H.E. Mohamed Ibn Chambas**, Special Representative of UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and Head of UNOWAS
- **Mr. Mabingue Ngom**, Chair a.i. R-UNSDG-WCA, & Regional Director, UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office;
- **Dr. Matshidiso Moeti**, Regional Director, WHO Regional Office for Africa,
- **Ms. Marie Pierre Poirier**, Regional Director, UNICEF West and Central Africa,
- **Mr. Chris Nikoi**, Regional Director, WFP West and Central Africa

Moderator: Damian Cardona Onses, Director, UN Information Centre, Dakar

WHY: West and Central Africa is faced with the biggest health epidemic since the Ebola epidemic in 2014-2016. The geographic spread is wider – all countries in the region have confirmed cases. The region reported its first case of the COVID-19 on 29 February 2020. As at 23 April, there are 7,840 confirmed cases, more than 210 people have died and 2,261 have recovered. There are over 5,396 cases still under treatment. There is a need for concerted action globally and greater attention to people already made vulnerable by poverty and humanitarian crises – many of whom live in this region.

UN agencies are working with governments and partners, to implement the recently launched **US\$2 billion Global Humanitarian Response Plan**. International donors pledged a quarter (US\$550 million) of that amount at the launch in March 2020.

The agencies are calling for \$350 million to be specifically earmarked for the establishment of a rapidly enhanced and expanded UN global logistics system, including key regional hubs, to serve as air and cargo bridges to move key personnel and equipment as conventional air traffic has shut down, or movement has been restricted.

Heads of all UN's major agencies have issued an Open Letter calling for more support to the world's weakest countries, noting the "interest to stop the virus from spreading unchecked, destroying lives and economies, and continuing to circle around the world."

About the COVID-19 Executive Committee of the Regional Directors of the UN Sustainable Development Group for West and Central Africa

The COVID-19 West and Central Africa Executive Committee (WCA-EC) brings together regional Directors of the UN system in west and central Africa and serves as a regional platform of coordination and communication. They share notes on individual agencies efforts while building on past experiences and lessons learned to propose targeted services to address the crisis. This enables an effective, coherent and coordinated support to the various initiatives at the country level through regional agencies collective efforts. The members include IOM, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNOWAS, WFP, WHO, UNOWAS and OCHA

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