Media Update
27 March 2020

United Nations
Remarks

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS AT G20 VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
26 March 2020

Thank you, Your Majesty, for convening this meeting.

We are at war with a virus – and not winning it.

It took the world three months to reach 100,000 confirmed cases of infection.

The next 100,000 happened in just 12 days.

The third took four days.

The fourth, just one and a half.

This is exponential growth and only the tip of the iceberg.

This war needs a war-time plan to fight it.

Solidarity is essential. Among the G-20 – and with the developing world, including countries in conflict.

That is why I appealed for a global ceasefire.
Allow me to highlight three critical areas for concerted G-20 action.

**First, to suppress the transmission of COVID-19 as quickly as possible.**

That must be our common strategy.

It requires a coordinated G-20 response mechanism guided by WHO.

All countries must be able to combine systematic testing, tracing, quarantining and treatment with restrictions on movement and contact – aiming to suppress transmission of the virus.

And they have to coordinate the exit strategy to keep it suppressed until a vaccine becomes available.

At the same time, we need massive support to increase the response capacity of developing countries.

The United Nations system has a well-established supply chain network, and we stand ready to place it at your disposal.

**Second, we must work together to minimize the social and economic impact.**


The challenges before us dwarf those of 2008.

And what we face today is not a banking crisis; it is a human crisis.

While the liquidity of the financial system must be assured, our emphasis must be on the human dimension.

We need to concentrate on people, keeping households afloat and businesses solvent, able to protect jobs.

This will require a global response reaching double-digit percentages of the global economy.
I welcome infusions of liquidity and social and economic support in developed countries — with direct transfer of resources to people and businesses.

But a stimulus package to help developing countries with the same objectives also requires a massive investment.

For this, we need greater resources for the International Monetary Fund and other International Financial Institutions, a meaningful emission of Special Drawing Rights, coordinated swaps between central banks and steps to alleviate debt, such as a waiver of interest payments.

I also appeal for the waving of sanctions that can undermine countries’ capacity to respond to the pandemic.

Third, we must work together now to set the stage for a recovery that builds a more sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy, guided by our shared promise — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let us do what it takes, urgently and together.

Thank you.