



NIGERIA



SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

OFFER FOR POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY

2 JUNE 2020

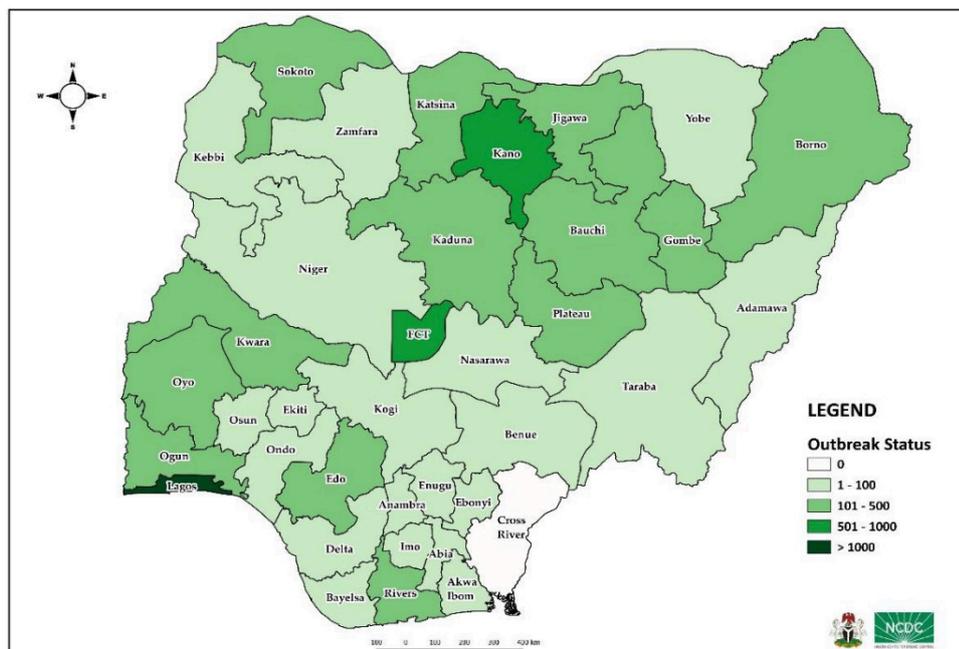
ABBREVIATIONS

ACFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
BAY	Borno, Adamawa and Yobe
CCRT	Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
LCB	Lake Chad Basin
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LNOB	Leaving no one behind
MSME	Micro-small and Medium Enterprises
NCDC	Nigerian Centre for Disease Control
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDPG	Nigeria Development Partners Group
NPI	Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions
PLHIV	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has spread all over the world creating a global health crisis which has disrupted the daily life of nearly all global citizens, and Nigeria has not been spared. As of 2 June 2020, 10,578 cases had been confirmed across 35 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with 299 fatalities. The pandemic has also spread to areas affected by conflict in the country including the North-West, Middle Belt and North-East, which are also dealing with humanitarian crises as well as outbreaks of other infectious diseases such as cholera, Lassa fever and tuberculosis. The pandemic is putting immense strain on the already overstretched health system. Estimates from other countries indicate that around 20% of COVID-19 cases will require hospitalization and 7.5% intensive care. Presently, there are only five hospital beds per 10,000 people, and along with the shortages of doctors (with a doctor to population ratio of 0.3 per 1,000 people) and nurses, inadequate infrastructure and equipment across the country pose challenges in responding to the pandemic.

FIGURE 1: SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN NIGERIA (JUNE 2 2020)



The scale of the spread of the virus and the subsequent containment measures are having knock-on effects on all economies around the world, including Nigeria. The impact on Nigeria is along three fronts: first, the impending global recession due to the disruptions of value and supply chains across the globe which, according to the IMF, could be equally or more devastating than the 2009 financial crisis. The implications of such a recession for a country like Nigeria that is so dependent on the global economy could be severe.

The second issue/front is the sharp drop in oil prices and its adverse effect on government revenue. Oil revenues, which used to contribute 65% of government revenue, has declined significantly, reducing total fiscal revenue by 40% and curtailing the government's fiscal space and its ability to respond to emerging needs and provide basic services.

The third issue is the disruption to businesses (both formal and informal) and the daily lives of ordinary Nigerians due to shutdowns and restrictions on movement with little resilience to cope. Societies have become dysfunctional with serious implications on employment, poverty and general health. The resulting disgruntlement of citizens, with attendant threats to social cohesion and the alarming levels of gender-based and domestic violence are contributing to what the UN Secretary-General has referred to as a 'shadow pandemic.' A significant increase in violent conflict can be expected, which could have serious impact on humanitarian assistance.

The adverse implications of the pandemic, in addition to Nigeria's already large and vulnerable population in a complex development setting, calls for concerted action to mitigate the socio-economic implications of COVID-19 on the people now and in the medium term. As the UN Secretary-General emphasized in his report, "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19," the scale and complexity of the crisis warrants a coordinated approach to mitigate the adverse effects of the virus, especially on the most vulnerable populations.

In line with the SG's call for action to cushion the knock-on effects of the crisis on the livelihoods of a large section of the population, especially vulnerable groups, and the efforts by the Nigerian Development Partners Group (NDPG), this note articulates an offer for immediate and medium-term support to the Government of Nigeria and its people to assist with the response to the socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The immediate interventions will contribute to risk mitigation by providing safety nets for the vulnerable through measures such as cash transfers. The medium-term measures will contribute to socio-economic recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

The rapid assessments, which are yet to be undertaken, will help create an understanding of the immediate as well as medium-term effects of the pandemic and enable the design of appropriate interventions. As a detailed program with key interventions will be crafted in due course, this UN Offer (offer from now onwards) will focus only on key risk domains/sectors that would help achieve socio-economic recovery.

The offer applies the global UN framework to the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, putting into practice the UN Secretary-General's Shared Responsibility Global Solidarity report. It is one of three critical components to save lives, protect people and build back better alongside the health response, led by WHO, and the humanitarian response. It also sets out the major implications and proposed responses across the five streams of work including (1) health services (2) social protection (3) impact on jobs (4) macro-economic policies and (5) social cohesion.

Partnership lies at the heart of this. The UN will work in partnership with the donor community and IFIs (IMF, the World Bank and other financial institutions) to develop a cohesive and holistic response to support the government in its efforts for socio-economic recovery and building back better.

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Impact on health systems: The pandemic is already exerting immense pressure on the country's already frail health care system. In anticipation of increased numbers of cases, various facilities have been identified for conversion into isolation and treatment centres, including wards in military hospitals and stadiums in Lagos and Abuja. As many as 4,000 beds dedicated to COVID-19 cases have now been set up.¹ However, despite Nigeria's efforts to strengthen the capacity of the health system, including expanded testing, and increasing hospital beds, these could be overwhelmed within a few weeks, particularly as the doubling period of confirmed cases continues to decrease.

Nigeria's challenges could be compounded by a lack of adequate supportive medical equipment such as surgical masks, gloves, supplies of oxygen and ventilators in adequate quantities. The provision of essential health services will come under additional pressure, which will potentially lead to an increase in indirect mortality and morbidity, especially maternal and child mortality. Some poorer regions, particularly the conflict-ridden north-east region and highly populated regions, have some of the weakest health systems and a population characterized by the prevalence of comorbidities, heavily exposing them to the brutal realities of a widespread virus.

With the expected exponential increase in the number of infected people in the weeks/months ahead, the capacity will continue to be challenged, both at the federal and state levels. As already strained public health resources (financial and non-financial) are redirected to the crisis response and the health system comes under increased stress as the crisis advances, essential health services for women and girls, and PLHIV, such as antenatal care and overall sexual and reproductive health services, are likely to be affected.

Impact on people: As localized increases in the prices of commodities have been reported due to supply constraints, inflation could increase in the coming months, despite a reduction in fuel prices by 15%, disproportionately affecting the poor.² Temporary job losses (estimated at 3.8 million due to the lockdown) and price increases will drive more people into poverty on top of the close to 90 million people who are already living below the \$1.90 a day poverty line. The World Bank estimates that five million additional Nigerians will become extremely poor as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.^{3,4} The COVID-19 pandemic in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states could increase the vulnerability of people in IDP camps and the rural poor with seven

1 UN Nigeria, Brief#3: COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria 17 April 2020 and based on Presidential Address 27 April 2020.

2 Inflation in March 2020 rose to 12.6% from 12.2% in February 2020

3 https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/impact-covid-19-coronavirus-global-poverty-why-sub-saharan-africa-might-be-region-hardest?cid=dec_tt_data_en_ext

4 UN Nigeria, (April 17, 2020), Brief 3-The COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

million already needing humanitarian assistance. Crisis exacerbates existing inequalities, as was evident during the Ebola and Zika crises, in which the long term economic and health impact disproportionately affected women.⁵ Alongside the macro-economic projection, the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and associated containment measures on women's employment, income generation, and livelihoods will be substantial. Significant decline or loss of financial resources puts women at greater risk of food insecurity, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and negative coping mechanisms such as survival sex work and overall heightened vulnerability to the pandemic.⁶ Women are also underrepresented in all decision-making bodies that shape the COVID-19 intervention in Nigeria, which means that their needs might go largely unmet.

Impact on the economy: The international prices of oil, Nigeria's major export commodity, has dropped by 60% since the outbreak of the virus, forcing the government to revise the 2020 fiscal revenue projections from an initially approved NGN 8.41 trillion to NGN 5.08 trillion (40% drop).⁷ The slump in oil prices, lockdowns and restrictions on the movement of people are dealing a severe blow to the Nigerian economy. In a case scenario of contained outbreak, Nigeria's GDP growth rate could decline from 2.5% to -3.4% in 2020 (IMF 2020) due to disruptions in production, services and value addition in several sectors. This could worsen to -8.8% in the scenario where the outbreak is not contained (McKinsey, 2020). As already seen in all the sectors, particularly in the informal sectors in Lagos, FCT and elsewhere, unemployment has sharply risen due to the shutdowns and restrictions on movement. Over 3.8 million people, mainly in the informal sector (where women make up 48.2% of the workforce) could lose their jobs temporarily, a number that could rise to 13 million, if the lockdowns and restriction on the movement of people continue for a longer period. Women and youth could suffer the devastating effects of such job losses including vulnerability to food and monetary poverty.

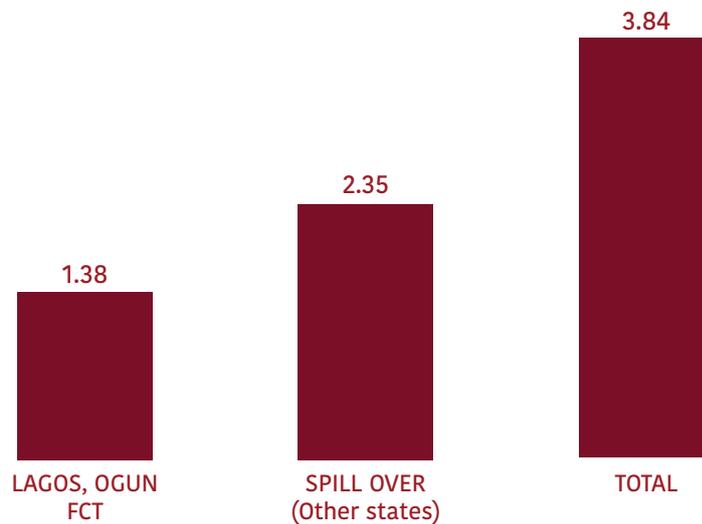
Social distancing measures are likely to affect female informal sector workers and daily wage workers (e.g. market women) the most. Many will lose their jobs or see their income significantly reduced (e.g. domestic workers). Others will see mobility restrictions, closure of borders or limitations in accessing urban markets and workplaces, significantly reducing their income and livelihoods. Women smallholder farmers are also losing the wet season window in some states due to mobility restrictions. Informal workers and those in vulner-

5 <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930526-2>

6 <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-impact-covid-19-women>

7 Federal Government new budget proposals presented to national assembly

FIGURE 2: ESTIMATED IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON JOB LOSS (MILLIONS)



able employment have lower incomes, few to no savings, no health insurance or other basic social safety nets to cushion them during this period.

The government has adjusted both monetary and fiscal policies to stimulate the economy and provide economic relief to the most vulnerable. Additional public expenditure in terms of a possible fiscal stimulus and expenses related to fighting the coronavirus could overshoot expenditure targets, resulting in a sharp increase in the budget deficit from the original estimate of 1.5% of GDP to 8.3% in 2020. This could inevitably result in increasing the debt burden and debt service payments in the short to medium term. While this is expected and warranted as an emergency measure, the size of the shocks could not only narrow the fiscal space and limit government's ability to respond to the challenges, but it also threatens internal as well as external stability. The latter could have far reaching implications.

Although Nigeria is not one of the countries that could benefit from the IMF's initial debt relief package through the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT), it qualifies for the China-G20 debt relief as a member of the International Development Association (IDA) based on the country's per capita income. More recently, the IMF disbursed US\$3.4 billion of emergency support to Nigeria through the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) to meet urgent balance of payment needs.

Impact on communities and social cohesion: The lingering food insecurity, and rising poverty and unemployment, among others, are having a severe blow to the societal peace and harmony as sporadic violence has been reported in several states under lockdown such as Lagos and Ogun, adding to the already existing tensions in some areas including the Middle Belt. Prior to the lockdown, the prevalence of women experiencing various forms of do-

mestic violence (physical, sexual, emotional, spousal) stood at over 31% for Nigeria, with some regional variations.⁸

Evidence of increases in gender-based and domestic violence, violence against health workers caused by serious stress levels that the pandemic places on patients, as well as abuse of power by police and armed forces have been reported in Nigeria. The situation could deteriorate further as the stress levels increase, movements are restricted, and livelihoods impacted adversely. In addition to compromising the knowledge acquisition and, therefore, the future of the youth, the school closures also entail some additional burden for parents; they not only must take care of their children the whole day, but also provide more food to feed them, which adds to parents' burden and stress in poor families.

Some groups will also be disproportionately affected by the lockdown and its socio-economic consequences. The elderly and persons with disabilities are not just struggling with greater health risks and marginalization but are also less likely to be able to cope as well as others in dealing with lockdowns, quarantines and living in isolation given they often rely on caregivers. Persons in correctional facilities and other detention settings or rehabilitation centres could face a higher risk of contracting the virus due to living in confined conditions and a significantly poorer health profile. Homeless people and particularly street children will also be especially hard hit by the absence of livelihoods or access to safe shelter, which can lead to a rise in risky behaviours and negative coping mechanisms, especially for adolescent girls.

The same issues apply to IDPs and refugees who are also at heightened risk due to the nature of their living conditions in camps and camp-like settings. Those with underlying health conditions such as PLHIV and the elderly, many of whom have chronic health conditions, as well as persons with disabilities are also at heightened risk. At even greater risk are those with multiple vulnerabilities - the most vulnerable of the vulnerable such as, female PLHIV-headed households, adolescents and young PLHIV and pregnant PLHIV, especially those close to delivery.

As of 20 May 2020, 18,000 Nigerians stranded in Libya and in European countries have been returned home. Like many other vulnerable groups, these Nigerians will be adversely affected by the pandemic as many of them have small businesses as part of their reintegration packages. Social distress will

⁸ Nigeria National Demographic and Health Survey, 2018

have an impact on irregular migration, a big development concern for Nigeria before the pandemic.

Traditional gender roles ascribed to women and girls often mean that they do up to three times as much unpaid care work at home, and are primary caregivers for sick family members, a situation which exposes them to the risk of contracting and transmitting the coronavirus, particularly given their limited access to sanitation, health care and information. As highlighted earlier, the crisis has also seen a significant increase in sexual and gender-based violence. Women's access to essential health care, to maternal health and family planning services is also declining, which will lead to an increase in unwanted pregnancies and consequently in maternal mortality and morbidity. The UN's response across pillars will be gender-responsive and will prioritize service provision to vulnerable groups.

These multiple adverse effects on the society have severely constrained their usual collective responses to crises and resilience to shocks

AN OFFER FOR POST-COVID-19 TRANSFORMATIVE RECOVERY

This offer will focus on both immediate and medium-term interventions to help the government initiate a paradigm shift in development towards a “New Nigeria” beyond recovering from the shocks of the pandemic. It will complement efforts by both the government and IFIs on the macro-economic front by paying greater attention to cushioning the people from socio-economic shocks to building back better and supporting the push for a sustainable, robust and inclusive post-COVID-19 growth path that paves the way to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

The emphasis will be on groups most vulnerable to the pandemic and the continuity of service provision, including existing humanitarian response, by strengthening and sustaining their capacity for resilience and recovery. Given the greater impact of the pandemic and the lockdown on urban communities, the immediate emphasis will be on affected urban informal communities.

The path of the pandemic in Nigeria is still unfolding and its full impact on the economy and people is yet to be discovered. Hence, the policy responses and interventions need to be flexible and evidence-based to cater to emerging needs and medium-term implications. This is, therefore, a living document with changes expected as the pandemic and its implications evolve.

FOCUS AREAS

This offer will have the overarching principle of “leaving no one behind” (LNOB). An increasingly narrowing fiscal space, dwindling household savings and earnings, and weak social protection systems make the LNOB principle even more important. In this regard, the focus will be on those populations whose pre-existing marginalization, deprivations and vulnerabilities are compounded by the coronavirus and related NPIs, and those that have suffered a severe impact as a result of the current crisis.

Ongoing analytics and existing data will be used to identify target groups, including women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, migrants/refugees, and persons in correctional facilities and other detention settings or rehabilitation centres, among others.

This paper will help define programmatic responses that reach the poorest and most vulnerable. Interventions will promote an inclusive and human rights-based approach to the provision of services and livelihood support, ensuring that COVID-19 responses fully incorporate human rights considerations. Interventions will also address gender implications of COVID-19 and

design tailored actions to avoid gender-based discrimination and to transform pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and vulnerabilities.

The immediate response will be strengthening the health system to respond to the health crisis and addressing the lingering food insecurity, which could be more threatening than COVID-19. The medium-term measures will target support to restoring and protecting the economy, service provision, livelihoods and employment while creating an enabling environment to help bring the economy back on a sustainable development path. The response will be sequenced based on priority sectors considering greater development impact, welfare gains and resource constraints.

HOW WE DELIVER

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed several fundamental weaknesses at the health, social and economic fronts. Weak economies in most developing countries and the limited fiscal space prevented them from taking quick measures to respond to urgent needs. Even if the government could take such action, they are likely to be put in a debt dilemma in the years to come. The weak economic environment and basic social services mean people are highly vulnerable to shocks such as COVID-19, leading to a high risk of unemployment, increased poverty and inequality.

This offer will help the government in addressing these challenges collectively. While in the short-term responses will address immediate and urgent issues such as health system challenges and food insecurity, medium-term measures should enable Nigeria to diversify its productive base away from oil and gas, which the government's medium-term development plan had been crafted to achieve.

Guiding principles: The guiding principles are national ownership and inclusivity. Recognizing the sovereign mandate of the government and other national institutions in advancing the country's existing development agenda and strategies, we will work in close collaboration with the government and align our support to national response structures, including the National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan, while contributing to government priorities.

As per the global UN framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, this will be based around five key pillars: (i) Strengthening health systems and response; (ii) Protecting people; (iii) Economic recovery; (iv) Macro-economic response and partnerships; and (v) Social cohesion.

The offer will apply high standards on gender equality and other cross-cutting issues throughout the project cycle, supporting and encouraging both

dedicated targeted interventions and gender mainstreamed programming. To support these efforts, the Fund will use the UNCT Gender Equality Marker (UNCT GEM) to track financial allocation to interventions that promote gender equality and women's empowerment in overcoming the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Time Frame: The focus will be on immediate support to health systems and food security within the next six months, including support for crop production and livestock, and the medium-term measures will help the government recover from socio-economic shocks and initiate a paradigm shift in development towards a "New Nigeria" in the next 2-3 years, thus creating the nexus for long-term recovery.

Use existing mechanisms: To be effective, the responses will be implemented with urgency using existing mechanisms and systems with minimum transactional cost. Programme and operational modalities will be made flexible to respond to critical and humanitarian needs.

Coordination and technical lead: Overall oversight will be provided by the UN Resident Coordinator with UNDP support as technical lead and collective responsibility of the UNCT. OCHA, WHO, and UNDP will lead on the humanitarian, health, and socio-economic response and recovery, respectively. The UN will update its existing reporting and information sharing platforms for effective and timely reporting of progress of implementation. It is proposed that each of the five pillars will be co-led by sector leads within the government, UN and Nigeria Development Partners Group.

Multiple sources of funding: We will use several sources of funding, the first of which is the repurposing/reprogramming of existing resources for immediate use. The UN country team in Nigeria has established a One-UN Response Plan for Nigeria and a COVID-19 Basket Fund from which resources will be used for the implementation of short-term measures. The UN will also mobilize additional financial resources from both internal and external sources for its medium-term interventions.

Globally, the UN has launched a COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan which is costed at \$2 billion and is the primary vehicle for raising resources for immediate COVID-19-related health and multi-sectoral needs. Existing funding instruments such as the joint SDG Fund, Peace Building Fund, Spotlight Initiative, as well as vertical funds, are also potential funding instruments.

The IMF and the World Bank have already committed to assisting Nigeria in emergency funding to meet balance of payment needs and economic recovery. These, and additional long-term financing including borrowings, will provide an additional buffer to UN and donor support for recovery. More

importantly, the UN will provide support to the government and work very closely with key partners including the IMF, the World Bank, donors and the private sector in designing an Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF) for Nigeria that could be used as a planning and delivery tool for financing sustainable development. In this regard, the UN will support policy makers to lay out a strategy to increase investment in sustainable development and manage financial and non-financial risks.

Mitigating risks: The UN will pay close attention to transparency and accountability with timely reporting. These include mitigating risks of corruption and clientelism. The UN will provide the leadership across the international community and a platform to develop a unified and aligned approach to address these challenges

RESPONSE: DELIVERING SOCIOECONOMIC SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

PILLAR I: STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS AND RESPONSE

Strengthen health system capacity to respond to urgent needs: As Nigeria's health systems are weak and could be overwhelmed due to the pandemic, our priority is to support the strengthening of the health system, at the national as well as sub-national levels, to meet urgent demands and ensure the continuity of essential health services. The UN has been proactive in providing support to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in developing IPC guidelines coordinating the outbreak response and strategies, surveillance, and reporting at national and state levels. It has also provided supplies essential for infection prevention, control and case management, and infection control in strategic locations. UN will continue to provide support to further strengthen these initiatives including ensuring that women participate in health-related decision-making processes. Support will also be provided for the maintenance of essential health care services including immunization for vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, polio, yellow fever etc. and treatment of existing diseases including malaria, support to those with chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS as well as life-saving maternal and reproductive health services to avert preventable deaths.

Provide analytical, technical and policy support: The UN will provide immediate analytical and policy support including (i) gender analysis, research and technical advice to implement standardized response strategies and monitoring; (ii) strengthening the human resources capacity of the health system to respond to the crisis; (iii) provision of medicines, diagnostics, and other medical supplies and coordination in the distribution of such essential equipment; and (iv) construction/conversion of emergency hospitals, equipping ICUs in hospitals, strengthening laboratory capacity, treatment and isolation centres as necessary.

Support vulnerable communities: This initiative will involve immediately reaching out to the most vulnerable communities to minimize the spread of the virus to vulnerable people including through (i) support to strengthen social distancing or appropriate alternative measures, especially in IDP camps, by extending their perimeters; (ii) enhancing health services and the capability of the Nigeria Correctional Service to manage epidemics, prison decongestion exercises, and enhancing health education of staff and inmates; (iii) prioritised support and advocacy for those with underlying health con-

ditions or those at increased vulnerability to development of serious health symptoms such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, drug users, PLHIV and others as determined by the Government of Nigeria and the UN;

(iv) service provision for health workers which will include ensuring they have sufficient PPE and hygiene equipment during working hours to minimise infection as well as messaging to minimise stigma and to offer support for their psychosocial needs; and (v) support for continued essential health services including reproductive and maternal health care as well as support services for survivors of gender-based violence.

Build a robust health system: While the immediate support for health systems is aimed at meeting urgent needs in containing the spread of the pandemic, the medium-term measures will strengthen the capacity of Nigeria's health system to be robust, efficient, equipped and ready to cater to any impending health crisis. The UN will support and work with the government and states in reviewing and updating the national and state health policies to cater to emerging needs; strengthening the capacity of national and sub-national health systems in terms of health research and laboratories, hospitals and clinics, equipment and other essentials; strengthening skills of health professionals, at all levels, to meet demands; promoting and strengthening innovation-friendly health ecosystems; provision of health, including routine health services such as immunization and family planning services; strengthening capacities to combat diseases such as malaria, and ensure nutrition provision; support education of drug users including provision of over-the-phone drug counselling services; and strengthening health financing and insurance outcomes.

PILLAR II: PROTECTING PEOPLE

Continuation of social services is critical to minimizing the overall impact of the crisis on the people, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable. Strong social protection and basic services will also help recovery from health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic happen faster. Our estimates indicate that the impact of the pandemic could lead to 13 million temporary job losses and push millions of people into poverty. This is in addition to the almost 20 million (23% of the labour force) already unemployed and about 90 million (46% of the population) who are poor.⁹ This would imply impending food insecurity and malnutrition among the poor and would expose vulnerable populations to shocks. These may in turn increase domestic violence, irregular migration, and trafficking. Thus, interventions under this pillar will provide support to strengthen social protection while ensuring basic service delivery continues.

Scale-up safety nets: The Nigerian government has already commenced distributing relief packages to 2.6 million people currently included in the National Social Register representing the poorest of the poor, a category which has expanded to 3.6 million. The immediate objective is to join the government in providing relief to the people who are facing increasing vulnerability to food insecurity and prevent indirect mortality and morbidity through the provision of safety net instruments. Among them are food and cash transfers, especially for women informal workers, and other social safety net measures. Humanitarian aid along with post-trauma psychosocial support will be provided for people affected by the pandemic.

Strengthen social protection: While the immediate social safety net concerns are providing support to ensure food security, broader social protection is to be supported through a medium-term approach. Interventions will help build social protection systems that integrate responses to shocks, job losses and building resilience, while ensuring robust legislative, institutional, and financial frameworks for social protection that target the most vulnerable.

The support will also include exploring innovative, inclusive and sustainable financing options while factoring in support to build shock-responsive social protection systems. Greater focus will be placed on the gender-sensitive aspects of social protection focusing on social services, jobs, agriculture and food and nutrition security. Proposed interventions would also include building governance mechanisms at the national and sub-national levels for effective provision of gender-sensitive social protection to strengthen capacities for the effective operationalization of the national social protection policy.

Ensure access to basic services: In the short term, it will be key to maintain es-

⁹ During the quarter Q3 2018, 26.6% of women within the labour force were unemployed, compared with 20.3% of men within the same period

sential health services, including health services for non-COVID-19 patients, immunization, reproductive and maternal health, prevention and response to gender-based violence, and continuation of educational services and other basic services. Given the critical need during the pandemic, immediate support will be provided to ensure continuity in water and sanitation services by restoring supply chains and limiting workforce disruptions. Helping children regain lost educational opportunities, especially adolescent girls who are more vulnerable to forced marriages and early pregnancies, and training and reorientation to exploit the immediate opportunities, will be another urgent need. Priority will be given to regaining lost education of children during the closure of schools due to the pandemic through innovative approaches including home-based and virtual learning and other methods for poorer communities without necessary access to a better learning environment.

Women's economic, health and social well-being are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. This includes over-representation of women in insecure, low paid jobs in the informal sector, heightened vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, reduced access to forensic health services and justice, and other protection risks; hampered access to, or availability of, essential services, including reproductive and maternal health services; heightened care responsibilities in both formal healthcare settings as well as in the home; and limited participation and input into preparedness and response processes, among others. Interventions will support the government, civil society, youth and women's organizations in ensuring essential services such as maternal health care, reproductive health and family planning programmes and services for survivors of GBV are maintained.

Illicit drug use, already a major public health challenge in Nigeria, could increase as people try to cope with the consequences of COVID-19, and the more than three million people already living with drug use disorders have been severely affected by the lockdown due to reduced access to drug counselling, psychological and medical assistance. Returned migrants, including vulnerable returnees, who have been exposed to violence, exploitation, and abuse (such as victims of trafficking, kidnapping and torture), and who need specialized care, are at heightened risk due to their vulnerability status and living conditions in their communities.

PILLAR III: ECONOMIC RECOVERY

As indicated earlier, Nigeria is already on a path towards a recession - the worst in over three decades. The economic decline is due to the sharp drop in oil prices, as well as disruptions to production and services in most sectors with ripple effects on internal and external stability, employment and livelihoods, with the micro, small and medium enterprises and the broader informal sector being the hardest-hit. In supporting economic recovery, the key objectives of this offer will be the protection and improvement of the productive sector, including through support for business continuity, increasing women's participation in decent jobs, protecting jobs and promoting decent employment.

Strengthening local production and business continuity: This offer aims at strengthening capacities for local production and business continuity, including informal businesses, especially at the community level and particularly those involving women and youth, by providing financial support for retaining workers, maintaining production and supply chains by farmers and the business community, and improving access to finance. The focus will be mainly on the informal sector and micro-small and medium enterprises (MS-MEs)/SMEs. Women make up 47.8% of sole owners of micro-enterprises and 22% of SMEs, with a high concentration in specific economic sectors, including wholesale/retail trade, manufacturing, accommodation and food services and agriculture.¹⁰

The offer will provide support to the rainy season programme of the government to ensure a food system approach that serves suppliers, large and small-scale producers, and informal businesses while developing a prevention strategy and plan to anticipate any market disruption during the post-harvest period. The support will include easing the access of most affected smallholders to input supplies, which are adapted to the agrospecificities of their region, to sustain their production activities.

It will also provide the government with evidence for effective operational measures and policies to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on agricultural-based livelihoods and food systems. The support will particularly assist in entrepreneurship development, access to agricultural inputs, availability of labour (facilitation of seasonal workers), markets and financing, affirmative procurement and sourcing opportunities, especially for women, technological adaptation and innovation. As highlighted above, women are significantly represented here and will be prioritized for support.

¹⁰ National Survey of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2017

Strengthening Private sector's role in development: Re-establishing the necessary conditions for a quick return to a path of more sustainable economic growth in order to develop a more gender equal society with a stronger social contract and overall higher human development that can foster more inclusive societies in the future will be a key component for economic recovery. Just like MSMEs and SMEs, large enterprises will be key to stimulating production processes to take the Nigerian economy forward. This offer will seek to support the building of a “New Nigeria” by strengthening efforts to launch the country on the path of sustainable and green (climate smart) economic growth and development. It will focus on inclusive and integrated development planning that drives private sector development, innovation, SDG impact investments and greater integration with the rest of the world. In this regard, Nigeria will be better placed to harness gains from trade, investments in line with SDGs, increase the quality of public sector efficiency for private sector development and strengthen supply chains, logistics and partnerships.

Scaling up employment intensive programmes: Given the high levels of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, which disproportionately affect women, strengthening livelihood opportunities targeting the most vulnerable groups will greatly help Nigeria achieve its development objectives. It will be key to work towards the reduction of unemployment and poverty in the medium to long-term. Key objectives include empowerment of people through targeted human capital development, access to assets and finance, and knowledge and technological adaptation, not only to strengthen capacities for agricultural productivity, value chain development and marketing, but also experimenting with innovative approaches to livelihoods.

In addition, support for smallholder farmers and helping MSMEs and the informal sector will be prioritized to strengthen their capacities and skills for productivity enhancement along the food and non-food value chain. Small-scale producers, constituting 80% of local producers, play a critical role in ensuring food security in Nigeria. Livelihoods of these producers, and by extension that of the population that depends on their outputs, are dependent on their ability to access production resources and favourable climatic conditions. Interventions will target vulnerable groups such as youth and women, PLHIV, key populations, and the disabled. Access to markets and financing, technological adaptation and innovation will also feature strongly here.

Skills development: It will be important to also support the country to help develop its young population to reap the benefits of demographic dividend for sustainable development by strengthening their skills/talent. In this regard, skills of youth and less educated women will also be strengthened to meet the demands and exploit new opportunities. The pandemic has also ex-

posed the stark differences in developed and developing countries in educational opportunities during a crisis, especially when restriction of movement is implemented. In this regard, strengthening capacities, especially in remote areas, including distance learning, use of IT and learning innovations as well as development of market-driven skills through technical and vocational education training (TVET), entrepreneurship development, technological adaptation and innovation, and improving the entrepreneurial skills of both young men and women will be prioritized.

Energy for productive activities: The proposed immediate and medium-term interventions will be a mirage if the underlying energy deficit in Nigeria is not mitigated. Despite the country's enormous endowment in various energy sources, electricity supply still hovers around 4,000 megawatts (MW) in response to a projected demand of 24,380 MW, leaving about 80 million of the population without access to electricity. The majority of those excluded reside in the rural and peri-urban areas and are subjected to a vicious cycle of poverty as they are denied access to quality education, health care and means of livelihood. Mindful of the energy-economic recovery nexus, the UN will promote investment to foster an integrated solution across the country, especially in the rural and peri-urban communities, through development of renewable energy such as small hydro power (SHP), biomass and solar for strengthening agricultural/non-agricultural businesses and value addition. This will benefit the rural and peri-urban community dwellers and women farmers and business owners, schoolchildren and micro-enterprises.

Environmental resilience: The sustainability of economic recovery planned in this offer depends greatly on the state of the natural environment and the ecosystem. Nigeria is one of the top ten countries most vulnerable to climate change. This implies that without adequate mitigation and adaptation measures, adverse implications of climate change on socio-economic recovery could be significantly challenging and unsustainable. We will provide support to achieve Nigeria's commitments to the Paris Agreement by strengthening capacity to achieve targets agreed in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), including through mitigation and adaptation measures.

PILLAR IV: MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND PARTNERSHIPS

The weak macro-economic conditions triggered by the crisis necessitate a strong macro-economic foundation to rebuild the economy better. This would require significant resources and partnerships. Interventions will assist in establishing the needed foundation and help strengthen partnerships with all stakeholders including gender-responsive fiscal stimulus packages by identifying entry points for both cushioning the impacts of the crisis and for ensuring economic recovery.

Resource mobilization, financing and debt relief: Deploying its convening power, the UN will support the government in mobilizing resources to respond to the urgent needs, including continued economic stimulus, especially for the most vulnerable. In this regard, the UN will support the IMF/WB in macro-economic stabilization and continue to reach out to all stakeholders to rise to the challenge at this critical time to save lives and help bring the economy back on track. The UN will also advocate and align with IFIs and donors to support Nigerian investment in critical growth-driving and employment-creating sectors as well as help in accessing a debt moratorium and soft loans to strengthen the country's reserves and meet urgent needs.

Recognizing that there may be a need for a medium to long-term financing plan and that the response and recovery has fiscal considerations, the UN will also advocate for domestic financing modalities that are flexible and have a sector-wide approach.

Support for regional cooperation on trade policy: Regional trade offers great opportunities for Nigeria given the size of its market, innovations and thriving private sector. In this regard, Nigeria will be better placed to exploit gains from the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) Agreement. To achieve this objective, the offer will support Nigeria in strengthening supply chains and logistics, rules and regulations, standardization of products, custom procedures and trade facilitation.

Coordination: The UN will provide a coordinated and unified response in several ways. It will coordinate resource mobilization, management of funds and responses to ensure transparent and effective use of funds to meet the desired objectives. It will work closely with key international partners towards a collective approach and in close consultation with the IMF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank. Additionally, the UN will support regional coordination efforts among Nigeria's neighbouring countries through the support of migration and border management.

Regional movement of goods and services: A crisis of this nature could significantly affect supply and value chains within and outside Nigeria. Keeping the supply and value chains and regional movement of goods and services intact is essential to minimize any adverse effects of the pandemic on food and nutrition security and well-being of people in Nigeria as well as in neighbouring countries. Free movement of goods and services, including pharmaceuticals and laboratory consumables for health care that are not manufactured in Nigeria, is also critical for the welfare of people in neighbouring landlocked countries. The UN will support the free movement of goods and services through advocacy and assist, if requested, in further enhancing border management to help address any related security concerns.

Analytics and Policy advocacy: Analytics, which describe the connection between data generation (with sex and age disaggregated where possible) and effective decision-making, are a major requirement for effective policy advocacy. As indicated earlier, a fundamental objective is to support Nigeria in rethinking its development trajectory and craft a set of policies that will propel a “New Nigeria” that caters to the needs of the people and establishes itself as a regional and global leader in sustainable development. UN will support this through research, rapid gender assessments, data analysis and communication, advocacy, national, regional and global policy dialogue, collaboration and engagement with the government and other stakeholders.

PILLAR V: SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion through strong networks of relationships will play a key role in assisting the authorities to mitigate the pandemic. Social cohesion is also vital in keeping society together and ensuring it can function effectively at a time of multiple complex crises.

Social cohesion and human security: Investing in social cohesion is of special importance for countries such as Nigeria that are experiencing fragility resulting from protracted conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic is an additional burden on the society capable of disintegrating already fragmented social relations. The non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) such as quarantines, isolation, curfews, and lockdowns are changing social norms by limiting the space for social dialogue and connectedness, providing breeding grounds for stress, violence and communal conflicts.

To strengthen social cohesion at a time of crisis, psychosocial support will be scaled up to assist affected people by providing free national public health services, services that respond to sexual and gender-based violence against women, education and awareness campaigns, communication strategies, prevention and sensitization campaigns, and access to cultural resources, among others, to cope with isolation and its adverse spill over effects. Moreover, support for law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system, and the social protection system by COVID-19-proofing their services will be prioritized.

The UN will promote dialogue and coordination between communities, religious leaders and stakeholders in rural and urban settings, to facilitate the dissemination of information, the enhancement of trust between the parties, and the appropriate assessment of the local needs and coordinated response, as well as contributing to the strengthening of the local capacities when needed. Given the disproportionate impact of the lockdown on the urban poor, there will be greater focus on enhancing their resilience.

Effective governance: An effective governance mechanism will be fundamental to achieving long-term development objectives and to build back better. Efficient transparency and accountability mechanisms feature strongly in this process, not only because they drive efficiency, but also because they provide space for inclusive development. There will be a focus on supporting governance systems which are being put under strain during the crisis and to offer support to ensure that these mechanisms help improve integrity, transparency, accountability, cost effectiveness, business environment, enhanced civil society engagement, inclusivity, human rights, and social cohesion.

In this regard, the offer will support achieving existing commitments and legal obligations under UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the AU Anti-bribery Convention, Open Government Partnership (OGP), Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and similar bodies/agreements which are specific to enhancing transparency, accountability and integrity in the management of public finances.

The intervention will prioritize support towards strengthening governance mechanisms, including social accountability at all levels, improved human rights conditions, better coordination, and seamless alignment with federal level priorities. Implementation of these measures will consider local contexts and cultural values, sensitivity to conflicts, human rights, gender-based violence and communal harmony.

Human rights: The pandemic-related interventions, including lockdowns, restrictions on movement and social distancing, have led to several human rights violations, including gender-based violence, deprivations both in accessing health care and economic benefits by vulnerable groups, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. In supporting the realisation of the human rights of everyone, the offer will make a mapping of vulnerable groups that require support from the offer, provide support to strengthen institutional capacities to minimize human rights abuses including institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman Office, women's organizations, courts and others key to supporting accountability and transparency and access to justice.

Security, stability and conflict: Past crises suggest that economic crises and natural disasters will amplify crime and security threats, which in turn hinder economic recovery. Unprecedented crises also rarely pave the way for peace. In order to help sustain peace and strengthen social cohesion, especially in the crisis-affected North-East region, the UN will provide support to strengthen capacities for mitigating integrated conflict risks, including risks relating to farmer-herder, inter-ethnic and religious conflicts, and promoting peaceful co-existence to consolidate cohesion and strengthen the social fabric.

In this regard, the offer will support expanded and strengthened space for political and social dialogue as well as community cohesion aimed at lasting peace at the national and community level, and strengthening capacities to help the criminal justice and security agencies to proactively prepare for changing crime trends and recognize and respond early to new crimes.

Stabilization in North-East: Given the conflict situation in the North-East and its implications on the overall development and well-being of people in Nigeria, support there will be prioritized. Strengthening stabilization, including through the normalization of life and reinforcing security service facilities to respond to insurgencies, while ensuring the protection of human rights in a conflict situation, is key, as is enabling economic recovery. These twin approaches will accelerate the implementation of the commitments of the Grand Bargain, particularly in strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus, through a government-led process and a localization agenda to catalyse recovery and longer-term development in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe as outlined in the 2019-2021 Humanitarian Response Strategy.

We will also strengthen support for Nigeria's regional cooperation with Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) including through support for the Regional Governors Forum, political dialogues, policy dialogues at state level, and the Regional Stabilization Strategy.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING BACK BETTER

The overarching objective of this offer is to support the Government of Nigeria in building back the country's socio-economic systems better, not only to meet urgent needs but to also set a strong foundation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Undertaking this will require a cohesive approach to ensure a holistic and unitary response, including through robust partnerships with development partners, International Financial Institutions (IFI), the private sector, philanthropic institutions as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academia and the media to support the federal government, states and local communities. Our collective support on the socio-economic front, which will emphasise protecting people, economic recovery and macro-economic stability, and social cohesion, will help Nigeria rebound and rebuild towards a post-pandemic future that enhances the well-being of all, with no one left behind.

NEXT STEPS

The UN and the Nigeria Development Partners Group will initially undertake a rapid assessment against five pillars which include:

1. Strengthening health systems and response;
2. Protecting people;
3. Economic recovery;
4. Macroeconomic response and partnership and;
5. Social cohesion

The rapid assessments will help inform the immediate as well as medium-term impacts of the pandemic and enable the design of appropriate interventions. Each of the pillar assessments will be co-led by the UN and the Nigeria Development Partners Group and each assessment will be costed. The assessments will help identify risks and impact of COVID-19 against each pillar and provide an understanding of the modalities and partnerships required to ensure effective implementation in affected regions and across relevant sectors as well as the financing needs. The findings of the rapid assessment will be the basis for developing a costed and comprehensive international community programmatic offer on the socio-economic front. The offer will identify and implement the immediate interventions for risk mitigation by cushioning vulnerable people from risks and building resilience to shocks while the medium-term measures will aim at socio-economic recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

REFERENCES

IMF. (April 2020)., World Economic Outlook

McKinsey & Company (April 2020)., Tackling COVID-19 in Africa

UN. (March 2020)., SG's report on Shared responsibility and solidarity: responding to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19,

UN. (April 2020)., A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

UN Nigeria. (April 2020)., Brief 3-The COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria