



Mogadishu, 21 January 2021 – On 23 December 2020, the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Somalia and World Health Organization (WHO) Somalia country office signed a €5 million multi-year contribution agreement for a project to prevent further spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and to strengthen the health systems in the country.

The project, titled ‘Emergency operational response to COVID-19 in Somalia to support the prevention of large-scale community spread through public health systems strengthening’ aims to contain and suppress the COVID-19 epidemic, and other disease outbreaks, in locations where signs of circulation are indicated by the most recent surveys. This will prevent large-scale community transmission and the further spread and/or resurgence of the virus through the strengthening of the health systems in the country.

“WHO remains grateful for this generous contribution from the EU. The funds from this multi-year agreement will support and sustain our ongoing public health interventions for a longer period and will also bring to scale the much-needed public health action to prevent community spread of COVID-19 in one of the most fragile and vulnerable settings”, said Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik, WHO Representative for Somalia.

“The impact of these public health interventions funded by the EU are likely to result in saving lives and paving the way for the health systems to recover stronger and better from COVID-19. We are very thankful to the EU for their collaboration and I am sure this support will be catalytic in mitigating the adverse impact of COVID-19 on fragile health systems.”

We are grateful for the extraordinary effort that WHO has made throughout the COVID-19 period. Bridging the Ministry of Health and the international community, WHO has made us work as a team against this important challenge. In the path towards a prosperous and stable Somalia, COVID-19 should be seen as an opportunity to develop better public services and make Federal and State institutions work together in a more coordinated way,” said Nicolás Berlanga Martínez, EU Ambassador to Somalia.

WHO and the EU Delegation to Somalia will continue to collaborate closely in the future, alongside the health authorities, in their joint efforts to reach and support the most vulnerable populations across the country with essential and life-saving health services.

Note to Editors

This new and vital multi-year partnership stems from the Bilateral Technical Coordination Mechanism previously established between WHO Somalia and the EU Delegation to Somalia, under the leadership of the EU Ambassador and WHO Representative. The purpose of this mechanism is to strengthen operational response capacities for COVID-19 and other health emergencies, whereby WHO has been providing technical support and advice to EU activities, risk communications and awareness-raising initiatives related to COVID-19 to ensure alignment with WHO's technical principles and strategies, while the EU has, among other things, been providing logistical and flight support to WHO for moving critical health equipment, supplies, medicines and samples throughout the country, both during the flight and travel bans, and after these were lifted.

Since its inception in April 2020, this mechanism has helped to strengthen operational response activities for health emergencies and the COVID-19 response across Somalia, including by the EU commissioning numerous flights at the request of WHO to airlift critical equipment, supplies, medicines and disease samples throughout the country, as well as to and from Kenya – supplies to cover over 610 000 persons, including patients and frontline health workers.

As part of this new partnership, WHO, the Federal and State health authorities and the EU will therefore combine efforts to improve the living conditions, well-being and safety of the Somali population, by focusing activities on:

- improving monitoring and screening for the spread of COVID-19;
- reaching vulnerable populations with risk communication and health promotion messages;
- establishing an integrated disease surveillance and response system; and
- guaranteeing access to quality public health services through appropriate measures in support of the health system, including by conducting a service availability readiness assessment (SARA) survey, strengthening laboratory capacities, procuring and pre-positioning vital medical equipment and supplies, training health care workers on the management of priority epidemic-prone diseases and severe acute malnutrition with medical complications, and undertaking vaccination campaigns, including amongst high-risk populations.

Additionally, WHO Somalia received timely support from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in January 2020, in the form of US\$ 1.9 million for WHO's COVID-19 preparedness and response operations in Somalia.

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[EU and WHO unite to deliver critical life-saving supplies to flood-affected areas in Somalia](#)

[European Union and WHO Somalia deliver more emergency hospital supplies](#)

[EU and WHO deliver emergency life-saving supplies to flood-affected areas in Somalia](#)

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