



Jeddah/Geneva, 12 October 2020 – The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have joined forces with Yemen's Ministries of Health and Population and Planning and International Cooperation to provide emergency support to assist the country respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Built on Yemen's national strategy to counter COVID-19, the partnership aims to reduce the occurrence and to minimize morbidity and mortality rates of COVID-19 in Yemen by strengthening the operational capacity of 32 specialized COVID-19 treatment centres and the laboratory testing capacity of 2 medical universities in the country.

Improving the preparedness of the target facilities shall comprise supporting the activation and equipping of the 32 COVID-19 treatment centres through the provision of monitoring devices for severe cases, portable pulse oximeter devices, oxygen cylinders, oxygen refilling, nebulizer devices, ultrasound, and other biomedical equipment.

Strengthening the protection of health care workers is also given high priority in the project through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), and expanding laboratory testing capacity via the provision of 150 000 testing kits. Essential medicines and medical supplies will also be provided to facilitate the treatment of critical COVID-19 patients.

With the start of the present pandemic, the IsDB Group allocated US \$2.3 billion to counter the spread of the virus and to mitigate its economic impacts in its 57 member countries. In Yemen, the IsDB is providing a US \$36.6 million COVID-19 support package, which includes US \$20 million for the health sector.

The US \$20 million "IsDB Group Emergency Support for the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project" is the first partnership between IsDB and WHO in Yemen and is part of the large-scale global response by the 2 organizations to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also part of IsDB's pledge of US \$100 million during the virtual donors conference on Yemen, jointly hosted by Saudi Arabia and the United Nations on 2 June 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic is amplifying Yemen's underlying vulnerabilities as it comes on top of multiple challenges that the country is already facing including conflict, economic collapse, hunger, disease, and displacement. The combination of extreme vulnerability and low general

immunity has put Yemeni population, particularly the children, at exceptional risk. Development partners are continuing to support Yemeni health authorities to respond to increasing health needs, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note to editors

Yemen remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis, and WHO's most complex operation as some 24.3 million people – 80% of the country's population – now require humanitarian or protection assistance, with 14 million people in acute need.

More than 5 years of conflict have devastated Yemen's health infrastructure.

Seventeen million nine hundred thousand people out of the total population of 30 million need health care services in 2020. At the same time, only half of the health facilities are fully functioning, and those that remain open lack qualified healthcare staff, essential medicines, and medical equipment like masks and gloves, as well as oxygen and other necessary supplies.

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