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19 June 2020, Aden and Sana'a, Yemen — Aircraft carrying a total of 43 tons of laboratory supplies, ventilators, test kits, PCR machines and vital PPE to fight COVID-19 have arrived in Yemen, thanks to a donation to the World Health Organization (WHO) facilitated by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation on behalf of the International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen (IICY), a collaborative partnership of multinational companies and the United Nations.

“This donation comes at a critical time. It will have a massive and immediate impact on the ground helping to fill the gaps in Yemen’s hospitals and laboratories countrywide,” said Mr Auke Lootsma, acting Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen. “We welcome this extraordinary public-private partnership whose goal is to serve the people of Yemen. As the United Nations marks its 75th anniversary during an unprecedented global health crisis with severe economic and social impacts, this partnership is an example of how we can work together with the private sector to face humanitarian threats.”

IICY brings together partners from the public and private sectors, chaired by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation and including Unilever, Tetra Pak, the United Nations, the Yemen Private Sector Cluster and the Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in an effort to support the actions already being taken by WHO and local public health authorities to respond to the invisible threat of the novel coronavirus.

A fragile health system battling an invisible threat

The first case of COVID-19 in Yemen was declared in April, and the threat of full blown transmission of the virus looms large, spurring WHO and health authorities to fast-track efforts to ensure the establishment of isolation units, quarantine facilities, and clinical management training for the country’s remaining health care workforce.

Mr Nabil Hayel Saeed Anam, Chair of the International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen said:

“The deadly COVID-19 pandemic threatens to overwhelm a health care infrastructure already under enormous strain in Yemen. We stand on the brink of catastrophe and our best hope of responding is by working together. The International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen believes in the power of partnership. We are united in our desire to help Yemen prevail and by getting much needed medical supplies to WHO and other authorities, we can help make that happen.”

The 43-ton shipment of medical and laboratory supplies, obtained by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation on behalf of IICY, contains in total 426 ventilators, more than 1 million pieces of PPE, 34 000 COVID-19 nucleic acid test kits, 28 000 virus collection kits, 10 centrifuges, as well as other essential hospital and laboratory equipment. Delivery of the 43-ton aid shipment is being managed by the World Food Programme (WFP), with flights arriving in Sana'a and Aden, for onward distribution to hospitals and laboratories across Yemen by United Nations agencies.



Yemen is entering its almost sixth year of conflict, and the fragile health system and a population that has survived on food aid for years lives in fear. The health system in Yemen is only functioning at 50%, and health system functionality, such as access and capacity of health care personnel, is at less than 40%. Chronic malnutrition has left Yemenis vulnerable, their weakened immune systems a prime target for this virus.

Recent estimates based on modelling scenarios by the Imperial College London on the potential impact of the virus on Yemen are dire, predicting an estimated worst case scenario of over 64 000 deaths and more than 460 000 in need of hospitalisation in a population of 30 million.

As part of readiness and response efforts WHO and health authorities have established 59 isolation units, with over 675 ICU beds, and over 309 ventilators. 21 600 rapid tests have also been provided.

As the world continues its fight against this global pandemic, it must not forget countries like Yemen that need their support. The resources being donated by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation on behalf of IICY will provide the boost of supplies the COVID-19 response in Yemen desperately needs.

Notes to editors

About the International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen

The International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen (IICY) is a collaborative partnership of businesses and international organisations united by a desire to assist Yemen's response to COVID-19, at a critical time for the country and its people. IICY partners have joined together to work collaboratively to help international organisations and the Yemeni authorities respond to COVID-19 and help tackle challenges on the ground. Brought together and chaired by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation, IICY aims to make use of its partners' collective operational expertise, resources and knowledge to assist the Yemeni and international authorities and support communities in need. IICY will seek to help strengthen Yemen's resilience in the face of the global pandemic and enable clinical and scientific experts to respond effectively to COVID-19. IICY's founding members include the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation, Tetra Pak, Unilever, the United Nations, the Yemen Private Sector Cluster and the Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

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