

NEWSLETTER

UN System support to the COVID-19 response in Algeria



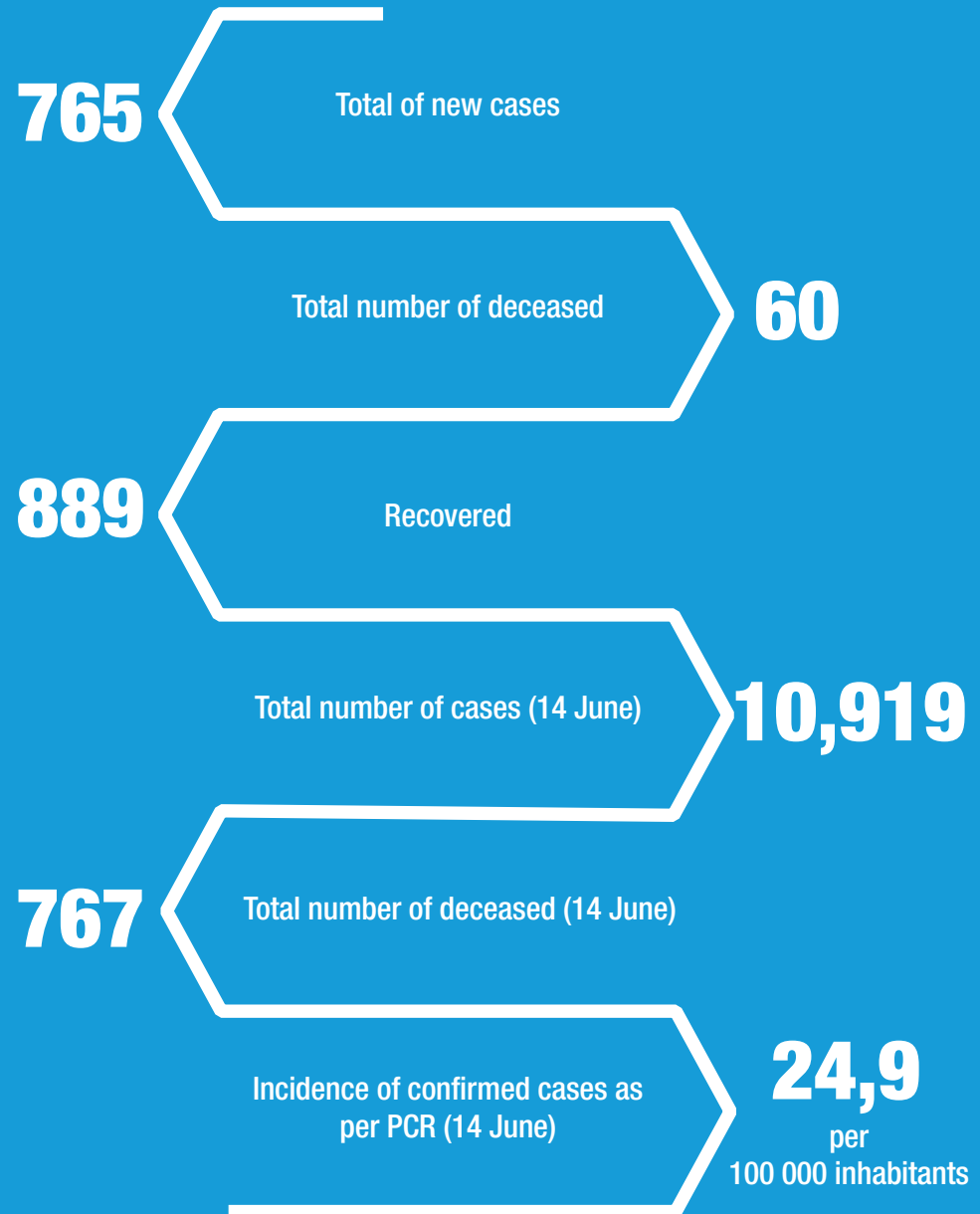
NATIONS UNIES
ALGERIE



COVID-19
RESPONSE

Epidemiological situation

from 8 to 14 June 2020 (23rd epidemiological week)



Dynamics and evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic in Algeria

With a daily average of about 100 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Algeria and a hospitalization figure of approximately 30 persons in intensive care, the epidemiological trend can be considered stable or diminishing over the past two weeks.

A slight reduction in the number of new cases has been observed since 18 May 2020. It can be concluded that the number of deceased persons is considerably higher amongst those above 60 years of age with 75,39% of the total number of registered deaths (n=707). Since the week of 18 May 2020, the average number of new registered cases has gone from 180 to 105 per day. The confirmed cases are

concentrated to the regions of Blida (12,28%), Alger (11,18%), Sétif (6,42%), Oran (6,32%) and Constantine (4,72%). With a daily average of about 100 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Algeria and a hospitalization figure of approximately 30 persons in intensive care, the epidemiological trend can be considered stable or diminishing over the past two weeks. Even though the pressure on the health system is reducing, the continuous reporting of new cases is a clear indication of persisting transmission at the community level. This calls for strengthening of the community dimension of the pandemic response.

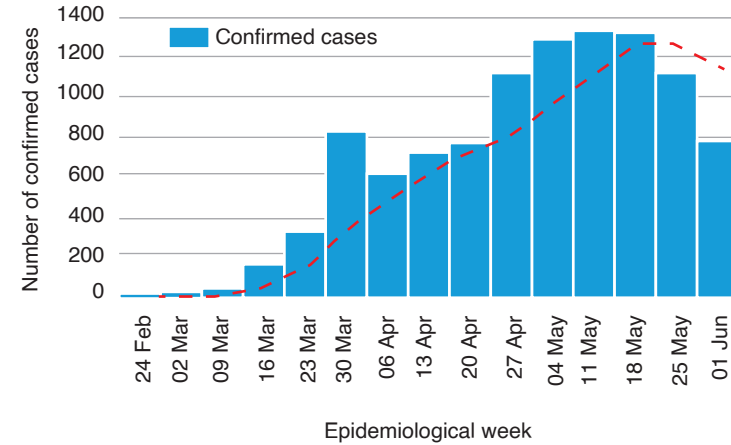


Diagram 1: Number of confirmed cases and death due to Covid-19 for each epidemiological week as of 7 June 2020 in Algeria

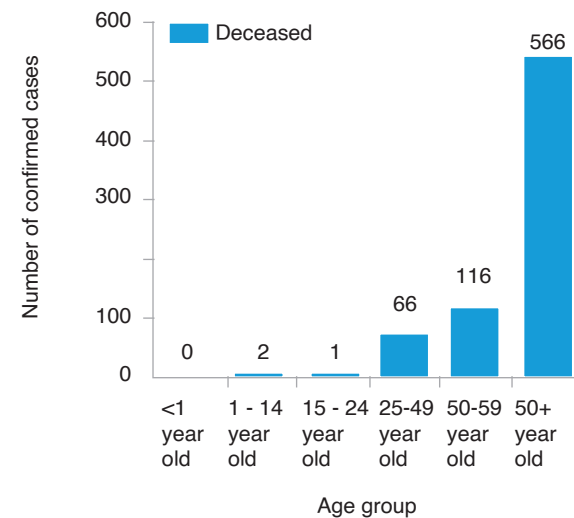


Diagram 2: Distribution of death due to Covid-19 per age group as of 7 June 2020, 16:00, in Algeria

Recent Government response measures

Lifting of the curfew and/or amended hours

The government has decided to end the lockdown in 19 regions while the curfew is amended (8pm to 5am) in 29 regions as of 14 June 2020

- The total lifting of lockdown measures concerns the following 19 regions: Tamanrasset, Tindouf, Illizi, Saida, Ghardaïa, Naama, El Bayadh, Tiaret, Guelma, Skikda, Jijel, Mostaganem, Tebessa, Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, El Tarf, TiziOuzou, Ain Defla and Mila.
- The adjustment of curfew timetable to 8pm-5am concerns the following 29 regions: Boumerdes, Souk Ahras, Tissemsilt, Djelfa, Mascara, Oum El Bouaghi, Batna, Bouira, Relizane Biskra, Khenchela, M'sila, Chlef, Sidi Bel Abbès, Médéa, Blida, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Tipaza, Ouargla, Bechar, Alger, Constantine, Oran, Sétif, Annaba, Bejaia, Adrar, Laghouat and El Oued.

Measures regarding resumption of activities

The government has taken measures aiming at resumption of the following activities:

- Lifting of the 50% exceptional leave with pay measure concerning employees in the public and private sector, for companies that can provide transport to their staff and maintain satisfying protective conditions adapted to their field of activity.
- Lifting of the 50% exceptional leave with pay measure for all government civil servants except pregnant women and women with small children.
- Resumption of urban transport by bus, tramway and taxi, on the condition of respect for prevention rules.

UN response to the health crisis

Through a coordinated interagency approach, the UN system supports, the “COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan” put in place by the Algerian Government and covering 5 main areas

01 | Resource mobilization

The total amount of mobilized resources is estimated at 52 million USD

The Resident Coordinator and the UN agencies work jointly to mobilize resources from donors and the private sector, notably in the area of procurement, under the lead of WHO, UNDP and UNICEF. WHO has nevertheless witnessed a low level of contributions for the implementation of technical assistance ever since the onset of the crisis, with only 10% of financial needs covered.

The EU, Canada, the USA, Japan, Switzerland, China, Austria, Germany, Great Britain and Denmark have pledged financial contributions through the UN system, both locally and at regional and global levels. The total amount of mobilized resources is estimated at 52 million USD, which does not encompass the contributions received in response to the humanitarian appeal for the West Saharan refugees in Tindouf, nor the contributions mobilized by the UN system in response to the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19.

Resource mobilization for COVID-19 outbreak in Algeria

Agency	Mobilised amount (USD)	Funding situation	Donor
UNICEF	1,500,000	finalised	USA
	362,900	ongoing	Canada
	300,000	finalised	UNICEF Algeria/Regular resources
	819,720	ongoing	UNICEF MENA/Japan
	500,000	finalised	UNICEF MENA/Denmark
UNDP	47,461,369	ongoing	European Union
	171,000	ongoing	Private sector
	150,000	ongoing	Switzerland
WHO	210,000	finalised	China
	172,500	finalised	Germany/Ministry of Health
	130,000	finalised	Denmark
	33,500	finalised	UK/DFID
	35,000	finalised	Austria/ADA
	76,000	ongoing	UK
UNFPA	40,000	finalised	Regular resources
UNODC	12,000	finalised	UNODC
UNAIDS	230,000	finalised	Global Fund
	15,000	finalised	Regular resources
Total	52,218,989		

02 | Technical health support

The UN system, through WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS and UNFPA, support the Algerian Ministry of Health, Population and Health System Reform in the following areas:

01 WHO has deployed a team of 6 public health experts, out of which 4 epidemiologists, to Algeria since March, in order to reinforce the country office and to support the Ministry of Health. WHO supports the Directorate of Prevention and Health Promotion and civil society organizations such as the Algerian Red Crescent and the Muslim Scouts to reinforce their COVID-19 response. The support is targeting (i) reinforced contact tracing, particularly through trainings on how to use the monitoring platform put in place (through the application GoData), and (ii) preparations for the training of Ministry of Health staff on surveillance mechanisms at terrestrial, aerial and maritime points of entry and departure. At the core of the discussions in the latest meeting between the WHO Country Representative and the Ministry of Health, held on 6 June, was the strengthening of response measures, notably in terms of the community aspect of contact tracing, as well as reinforced South-South cooperation.

In June, WHO has done a presentation for the National Scientific Commission on COVID-19 on measures to take in order to reinforce the community aspect of COVID-19 response. WHO has also organized a regional virtual meeting for the countries in the West Africa region to exchange experiences and lessons learned relating to the preparations and response to COVID-19 at border points.

02 UNICEF supports the Department for Prevention and Promotion of Health in [strengthening the School Health Programme through a prevention guide, under development, to be used by school health staff](#). A joint meeting between the executives of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Education was organized on 8 June 2020 with the participation of a team from UNICEF. The purpose of this meeting was to prepare for the reopening of schools and the development of guidelines and standards for professionals with a view to preventing COVID-19 infections in the school environment.

03 UNAIDS has supported the Health Ministry in the implementation of a rapid assessment of the needs of NGOs and a survey of persons living with HIV, in order to [ensure the continuation of prevention services and treatment for HIV positive persons and other vulnerable populations](#) in the context of COVID-19. UNAIDS has also supported the Ministry to reprogram Global Fund financial means for this year to feed into the COVID-19 crisis response plan.

04 UNFPA is planning, in collaboration with the Population Department of the Health Ministry, a [rapid evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on the work of midwives and the continuation of reproductive health services](#) in the most severely affected regions. Furthermore, UNFPA is coordinating with the Algerian Red Crescent and other civil society organizations to provide protective equipment to maternity wards.



Caption: Donations of medical material by WHO on 4 June 2020

03 | Logistics and procurement

- Procurement of test kits and protective equipment by WHO and UNICEF. At the beginning of June 28,000 diagnostic kits were delivered by UNICEF to the Health Ministry, WHO had delivered 13,000 PCR kits and a large quantity of reactive agent to Institut Pasteur. Other deliveries are in the pipeline, such as consumables purchased by UNDP (5 PCR kits and 10,000 reactive agents) and by UNAIDS in collaboration with the Global Fund and the Ministry of Health;
- Launch of a global COVID-19 procurement portal by WHO and WFP;
- UNDP is preparing for purchases of medical equipment in collaboration with the Central Hospital Pharmacy;
- UNICEF has assisted the Ministry of Health with information materials in support of central functions responsible for data monitoring relating to the COVID-19 situation;
- WFP has ensured the operation of humanitarian flights in the context of COVID-19 response.

04 | Communication

WHO is assisting the Health Ministry in the [production and distribution of communication materials for awareness raising of populations, focusing on behavioral change with a view to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the communities](#). UNICEF has supported the Health Ministry in the development of a communication campaign on the importance of nutrition for boosting the immune system.

Since February UNICEF Algeria has publicized approximately 400 posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn). The number of followers has increased by more than 400% and is now totaling 103 000. This increase can be explained by the fact that UNICEF, just as the Ministry of Health, has been recognized as “trusted organization” and is as such detectable in the COVID-19 Information Center on Facebook. UNICEF has reached 95 million views (number of times that its content has been seen on social media) in other words, an average of 600 000 unique persons having seen the publications and more than

730 000 reactions: likes, shares, comments (no double counts).

WHO has been in constant interaction with community organizations as well as providing trainings to volunteers on the ground, with a view to strengthening their capacity for community level messaging on how to prevent transmission of the disease.

WHO and UNICEF have jointly developed a Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) plan in support of the preparedness and response plan of the Algerian Government (Ministry of Health) with a view to reinforcing community engagement and awareness raising of populations in the context of COVID-response (support to public communication targeting associations and community networks). UNFPA has also supported the implementation of the communication plan targeting vulnerable populations and the youth with regard to respecting protective measures as well as the continuation of services.

UNICEF supports the Muslim Scouts in Algeria in their communication efforts relating to risks and prevention at the community level, mobilization of the youth through awareness raising activities and psychosocial support to children through participative and playful activities. UNICEF also supports a communication campaign around COVID-19 launched by the National Organ for the Protection and Promotion of the Childhood.

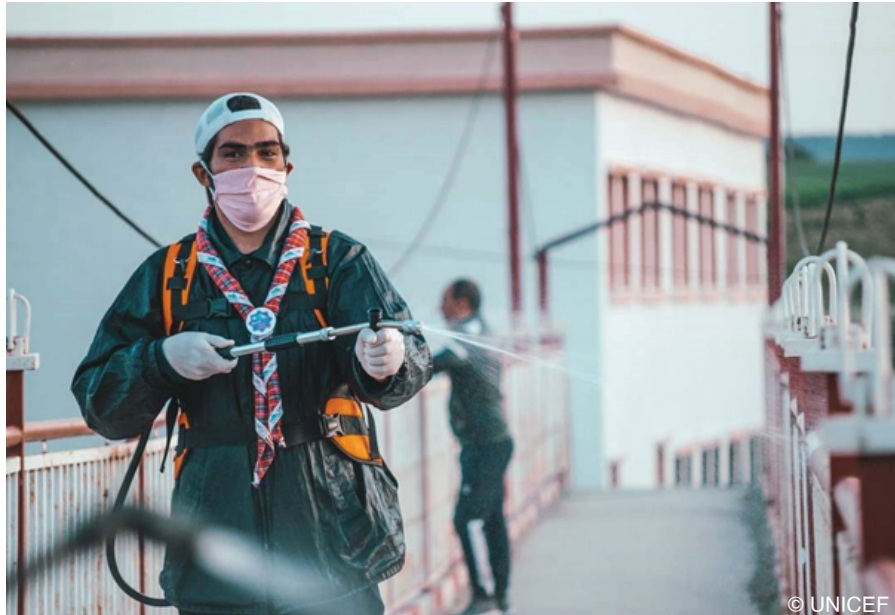
On the occasion of the celebration of the World Children’s Day, 1 June 2020, UNICEF and ONPPE launched a competition relating to the rights of the child: “Be creative! Paint, sing, tell” aimed at children from 5 to 18 years of age. The purpose of the competition is to respond to the need of activities for children and young people by engaging them in a motivation project to cope with stress in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement. In this context a video has been created by children, entitled “Think about yourself and think about us”.

The UN system has also strengthened its educative communication efforts on COVID-19 through the launch of two digital platforms:

Facebook: https://web.facebook.com/EnsembleContreLeCovid19/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ensemblecontre-covid19.una/?hl=fr>

UNAIDS COVID-19 blog: https://www.unaids.org/en/20200430_Algeria_pwud



Caption: Disinfection operation by the Algerian Muslim Scouts

05 | Support to vulnerable groups

The UN system has engaged in [advocacy in favour of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in distress, in order to ensure assistance during the lockdown period](#). UNAIDS, in coordination with UNODC, has supported the Health Ministry and NGOs with a view to providing protective equipment and means of communication to safeguard the continuation of combined prevention services for people who inject drugs.

UNHCR is implementing remote registration of urban asylum seekers. At the same time, with a view to retaking regular activities, UNHCR guarantees the renewal of asylum seekers certificates and refugee cards through mobile teams and/or scheduled appointment at the UNHCR offices. UNHCR has already reinforced communication with persons within its mandate through a call center with 3 mobile lines (French, English and Arabic speaking operators). Cash assistance for refugees and vulnerable asylum seekers is ongoing. Since the onset of the pandemic 550 persons falling within the UNHCR mandate have benefitted from cash grants thanks to customized distribution modalities, particularly through home delivery via mobile teams.

Humanitarian action

The humanitarian UN agencies and the NGO community working in the refugee camps at Tindouf have reacted to the health crisis by adapting the implementation of ongoing activities as well as launching new activities with a view to mitigating the risk for spread of COVID-19 in the camps. In April 2020 WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs with presence in the camps launched a [joint appeal amounting to 15 million USD to help to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, which might otherwise exacerbate existing vulnerabilities in the camps.](#)

01 UNHCR coordinates the COVID-19 response in the refugee camps with the West Saharan health authorities and the local authorities in Tindouf. UNHCR also coordinates the development of a preparedness and response plan in the health, food and WASH sectors;

- Reinforcement of existing health services is in the pipeline in support of health workers, consolidation of health infrastructure and the referral system, and to safeguard the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- WASH and food security: UNHCR contributes to the improvement of individual and collective hygiene conditions, potable water services and distribution of fresh food rations.
- UNHCR continues to support the community isolation center in the camps (for repatriated individuals). In addition to accommodation the UNHCR distributes food and hygiene articles to refugees.

- UNHCR supports operational partners based in the camps in the procurement process from Algiers to the camps, in collaboration with the Algerian Health Ministry, to facilitate the granting of authorization for purchases and shipment.

02 UNICEF, in close collaboration with the other UN agencies, contributes to:

- The purchase of protective equipment for health staff in the refugee camps;
- Reinforcement of the educative sector in terms of distance learning for the children;
- Numerous communication activities relating to risk awareness and the prevention of transmission.

03 WFP operations aim at preventing the economic impacts of the health crisis from exacerbating food insecurity in the camps. WFP has increased the number of beneficiaries of food assistance with approximately 20 000 people; notably day laborers, traders and taxi drivers, who have lost their incomes due to the pandemic.

- The additional assistance, initially put in place for three months, will continue in June and July. This assistance requires the mobilization of an extra USD 500 000, out of which USD 150 000 has already been pledged by Spain and Brazil. WFP continuously keeps the donors abreast of the increasing needs of the Sahrawi refugees. It has also prepositioned food for three

months in order to guarantee an uninterrupted food distribution.

- Other activities, such as the nutrition programme to cure and prevent moderate acute malnutrition, continue through the putting in place of mitigation measures. Complementary subsistence activities are ongoing to some extent. The school feeding programme has been temporarily interrupted until the reopening of schools.

Assessment of the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Algeria

The UN system, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, has carried out a [rapid analysis based on a macroeconomic model in order to measure the impact of COVID-19](#). The analysis examines the amplitude and principal areas of the crisis triggered by COVID-19 in Algeria, the potential domains of intervention targeting the most vulnerable, the emergence of new vulnerabilities and its aggravating factors and public policies to boost the economy, reduce inequalities (gender based and others) and reduce factors of vulnerability.

[In-depth surveys are necessary to enable the assessment of the socioeconomic impact on households and enterprises](#). The UN system, under the lead of the Resident Coordinator's Office, has offered its support to the Algerian government in carrying out an **assessment of the socioeconomic impact through household and enterprise surveys** under the technical leadership of UNDP (budget: 130 000 USD), in collaboration with UNICEF, ILO, UNIDO and WFP, targeting the two following areas:

- Households and vulnerable groups of the population: The survey will cover incomes and the socioeconomic situation of households before and after the epidemic; the access and capacity of the most vulnerable households to buy basic food products before, during and after the crisis; people's access to basic health services before, during and after the crisis (focus on the most vulnerable households); access to education for children with special attention to gender related differences; the socioeconomic situation of women, notably those confronted by multidimensional vulnerabilities (socioeconomic status, family situation, employment status) before, during and after the crisis; the frequency of violence against women in the homes before, during and after the crisis; the socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities or serious diseases, including their access to health services; the socioeconomic situation of migrant populations; knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning COVID-19.

- Small and middle-sized enterprises (SME): Evaluation of the economic performance, level of production and the productivity, financial and tax situation of SMEs in particular held by women entrepreneurs; assessment of the functioning of supply chains for food items between the production sites and market places for SMEs active in agriculture and agribusiness; the impact of contracyclical measures put in place by the authorities targeting SMEs; and the needs for support to SME recovery and growth. UNIDO has already launched a global survey on the impact of the pandemic on women and youth lead businesses in the manufacturing sector (including industrial services).

In partnership with the Minister for Employment, the ILO has proposed to launch in-depth studies devoted to:

- A rapid evaluation of the impact of the epidemic on the informal sector, allowing for a quantification of the "informalization" in relation to COVID-19 and proposals for solutions how to finetune the transition mechanisms put in place by the government a few year ago.
- The impact on small, medium and micro enterprises participating in a sub-regional survey; the study proposes an evaluation of the immediate, medium- and long-term impact of the pandemic and the identification of risk factors for micro enterprises and SMEs with a view to informing the economic recovery plans;
- **Evaluation of the impact on young graduates' entrepreneurship and new obstacles to the creation of enterprises.** ILO is in dialogue with ANSEJ regarding this survey which would focus on opportunities and potential future growth sectors, with a view to informing incentives for entrepreneurship and to identify the soft and hard skills necessary to boost future entrepreneurship.

In order to formulate policy options for how to respond to the consequences of COVID-19 on agriculture, fisheries and food security in Algeria, FAO has launched a project (budget: USD 100 000) which aims at (i) developing measures to reinforce resilience in terms of food security (ii) develop tools and data relating to food chains in the context of the pandemic (early warning system from production to procurement); (iii) the putting in place of specific and cyclical measures for the sustainability of food value chains; (iv) support to the putting in place of protection mechanisms for small scale and family farmers.

WHO and its counterparts are engaged in a reflection process regarding of the impact of the epidemic on the Algerian health system, its transformation in these new circumstances and what solutions can be proposed for the putting in place of a more resilient health system.

Preparing the UN staff for the end of lockdown

In order to prepare UN staff members for the end of lockdown and the return to office, trainings have been organized under the lead of WHO, with a view to sensitizing the staff on behaviours that will contribute to prevention of contamination in the work environment. More than 140 persons from 15 agencies have been able to follow these information sessions. Staff based in Algiers and Tindouf have also participated with big interest. The following UN agencies have taken part in the training sessions: UNDP, UNODC, UNOPS, UNDSS, RCO, UNIC, UNIDO, UNFPA, FAO, WFP, UNCHR, UNICEF, UNAIDS, IOM, WHO.

Staff have also been sensitized on how to organize meetings and events necessary for the implementation of cooperation programmes and the organization of field and international missions, while taking the necessary health precautions. WHO has shared tools and resources aimed at supporting colleagues in this new phase of the pandemic.

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