
Key Messages

- **As of 23 March, six cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Haiti.**
- **Following the confirmation of the first two cases on 19 March, the President declared a state of health emergency throughout the country. Measures to prevent the spread of the virus have since been announced.**
- **The Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC) has activated the National Emergency Operations Centre (COUN) and the Departmental Emergency Operation Centres (COUD) of all ten departments.**
- **WHO and humanitarian partners are supporting the Haitian Ministry of Health (MSPP) to implement its COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan.**
- **Urgent funding is required to extend UNHAS operations beyond April to ensure continuity of humanitarian operations.**

Context

- On 13 March, the MSPP officially launched the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan for Haiti.
- The Government has announced that as of 17 March, all flights except to and from the United States and Cuba would be suspended for two weeks; the border with the Dominican Republic would be closed to passenger traffic, though goods crossing the border would be permitted if the transporting personnel (limited to two people per vehicle) are screened.
- On 16 March, a Center of Permanent Information on the Coronavirus (CIPC) was launched by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health. The CIPC is responsible for carrying out awareness-raising actions, health recommendations, through the media, or the coordination of the Ministry of Culture and Communication and under the direction of the Prime Minister's Office. The population will be informed about the prevention, protection and evolution of COVID-19 in the event of a possible appearance and spread of the virus on national soil. Two telephone lines (4343-3333 and 116), have been made available to the public for all information related to the Coronavirus.
- On 19 March, following the confirmation of the first positive cases, the President declared a state of health emergency throughout the country and announced a number of measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including the closure of airports and ports to all passengers, the closure of all schools and factories, the banning of meetings or gatherings of more than 10 people, a nationwide curfew between the hours of 8pm and 5am, and a plea for social distancing guidelines to be respected. These come in addition to a first series of measures announced on 15 March.
- On 21 March, the President announced additional instructions for the population, instructing people to stay home, limit movements and practice social distancing. He furthermore announced responsive measures such as the distributions of basic necessities in certain neighborhoods, compensation for unemployed employees of industrial parks, and measures taken by the banking sector on credits.

Response

- The overall coordination of preparedness and response (including monitoring the epidemic, supporting government and health institutions, and coordinating the response to the epidemic) is ensured by the MSPP and WHO, with support from OCHA.
- To prepare for a potential outbreak of COVID-19, the WHO and humanitarian partners have been supporting the MSPP in four domains: coordination, surveillance, infection prevention and control / case management and risk communication. They have:
 - been assisting the MSPP in the implementation of their preparedness strategies and the elaboration of a preparedness and response plan,
 - supported MSPP's efforts for the strengthening of their surveillance system by training laboratory personnel and providing the necessary reagents and equipment,
 - provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to the MSPP for distribution to the personnel of the airports and the Centre Ambulancier National (CAN),
 - trained health care personnel of two hospitals in the management of COVID-19 cases,
 - provided hand washing kits to be installed in health centres and schools, and
 - been disseminating awareness messages regarding the virus at ports of entry and on social media.
- The UN and humanitarian partners continue supporting the MSPP in the implementation of its Preparedness and Response Plan, based on three groups that reflect the eight pillars recommended by the WHO globally: communication, surveillance and case management. In order to maximize the operationalization of the response activities, a coordination structure was established by OCHA to ensure a coordinated, systematic follow-up of the implementation. For example, WFP, IOM, UNICEF and UNOPS are working on a project to reinforce logistics, supply chain and rehabilitate health structures.
- A response plan that goes beyond the health response, but takes into consideration the impact of the crisis on livelihoods and education, is under development.
- In addition, the UN has established a Crisis Management Cell, which will aim to coordinate and harmonize the various ongoing efforts of the UN's internal response in Haiti, with regard to the impact of the virus on the organization's staff, agency programmes, and business processes.

Access

- Humanitarian access in Haiti has been significantly impacted by the different episodes of “peyi lok” throughout 2019, when roadblocks, burning tires and violent protests paralyzed the country and hampered road transport. A United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) commenced in November 2019 ensuring the continuity of humanitarian operations amidst increasing insecurity. The service is to terminate in April 2020 unless additional funding is ensured. This is likely to have an impact on the COVID-19 response. Some US \$1.5 million are urgently required to extend the service through the end of June 2020.
- It is crucial to ensure that all health institutions continue to be provided with oxygen, fuel, medical equipment and medicines, and that health personnel and ambulances have safe access to their workplace. As the crisis is likely to affect the economy and people's livelihoods throughout the country, continued humanitarian access and funding for lifesaving programmes, such as food distributions, must be ensured.

Additional Information about COVID-19

For more information on COVID-19 in Haiti, please visit OCHA Haiti's dedicated COVID-19 page:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/haiti/covid-19>

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