Key Messages: UPDATED

- People confirmed to have COVID-19: 996 (Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health - MoPH)
- Deaths from COVID-19: 33

Key concerns: Border crossing areas, in-country testing capacity, protective equipment for frontline workers, commodity prices, floods, messaging and rumour management, international air services

Situation Overview: UPDATED

MoPH data shows that 996 people across 30 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some 133 people have recovered and 33 people have died. Of the 33 people who have died from COVID-19, 30 had at least one underlying disease, the most common of which are diabetes and cardio-vascular disease. The majority were between ages of 40-69; men between the ages of 40-69 represent 60 per cent of all COVID-19 related deaths.

Cases are expected to increase rapidly over the weeks ahead as community transmission escalates, creating grave implications for Afghanistan's economy and people’s well-being. Hirat is still the most affected part of the country, followed by Kabul.

There are currently eight laboratories in the country. Each lab is able to process an average of 100-150 tests per lab, per day. Additional labs in Bamyan and Badakhshan are being established and the Government hopes to have a total of 15 labs operating within the month. Currently laboratory reagents and RNA Extraction Kits are in short supply; WHO is working to source additional supplies this week but is limited by a global shortage. The Ministry of Public Health has also recently established a 20-bed ward in Surobi district to provide care for COVID-19 patients and prevent further spread of the disease.
The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.
Update: COVID-19

As of 19 April, according to Johns Hopkins University there are 7,993 people confirmed to have COVID-19 in Pakistan. On Friday, Pakistan temporarily opened its border at Torkham. 518 Pakistani nationals were facilitated to return to Pakistan; 256 citizens of Afghanistan were facilitated to return home. Following regular health screening processes, those who crossed returned to their homes. Pakistan’s border is now closed to all except commercial vehicles. Pakistan is facilitating the movement of cargo trucks and containers into Afghanistan through the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points three days per week (on Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Five food trucks that had been waiting to cross from Pakistan have been cleared to cross into Afghanistan. It is hoped that the three remaining trucks will cross through on this week. Facilitation of these trucks to cross the border has mitigated potential pipeline breaks thus far. Humanitarians remain hopeful that border crossing for commercial traffic will be maintained according to the announced schedule to ensure the flow of humanitarian food and relief items from storage sites in Karachi.

Operational Issues:

A number of provinces have instituted measures to limit the exposure of residents to COVID-19. Throughout the country, these ‘measured lockdowns’ have resulted in closures of sections of each city and/or movement limitations. These include limits on the number of people travelling together and the imposition of curfews. Limitations on inter-city travel have also been implemented.

Reports indicate that despite assurances by the Government that these would not limit critical program movements of NGOs and the UN, newly introduced lockdown measures continue to impact on the mobility of some staff members. Humanitarian partners continue to urge the Government to employ a national approach to these issues so that individual negotiations are not required on a case-by-case basis. The closure of government institutions due to movement restrictions may create new coordination challenges for humanitarian agencies.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continues to make arrangements for an international airbridge. UNHAS has received an initial $3.7m in funding from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund and is now in the process of securing flight approvals for an international service with three flights per week between Kabul and Doha. Flights into Doha will accommodate transiting passengers only. The newly secured aircraft and crew have arrived in Kabul and flights are planned to start on 21 April, with subsequent flights scheduled for 23 and 26 April, pending successful negotiations on landing permits and air space. UNHAS intends to maintain flights every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday.

More Information: UPDATED

WHO
- WHO’s latest information on COVID-19
- WHO COVID-19 Strategy Update
- WHO COVID-19 Global Dashboard
- Interim guidance: Safe Ramadan practices in the context of COVID-19
- Interim guidance: Preparedness, prevention and control of COVID-19 for refugees and migrants in non-camp settings

Inter-Agency Standing Committee
- IASC-endorsed COVID-19 guidance – new materials available

UN and others
- Ministry of Education: Distance learning TV schedule
- Ministry of Public Health: COVID-19 Dashboard
- Relief Web: COVID-19 Response Page
- IOM: Dashboard on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility

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