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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:**

**Priority Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and
dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its
forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Covid-19 is a new strain of SARS-CoV-2 in a large family of viruses that cause illness like the common cold. COVID-19 is a virus infection resulting in severe acute respiratory illness. The World Health Organization was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown origin in Wuhan City, China on 31 December 2019.

In its wake, World Health Organization declared Covid19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most people who catch the Covid19 virus develop mild to moderate fever and recover without hospitalization. Some of the symptoms of the disease include: fever, cough, loss of appetite, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, aches and pains and irritation in the eyes.

As Covid-19 ravaged the world, WHO encouraged people around the world to take care of their personal health and protect others by:

- washing hands frequently with water and soap or using hand-sanitizing gel
- maintaining social distancing by keeping a distance of 1 meter (3 feet)
- avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth
- wearing a mask
- following respiratory hygiene (covering your mouth and nose with your folded elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, then disposing of the used tissue immediately);
- seeking medical care early

Covid19 has devastated the world and spread through all the continents of the world with many fatalities recorded. At the onset, Covid19 led to a dramatic and huge loss of human lives, many countries are currently dealing with humanitarian crisis and emergencies.

It is critical to respond inclusively and in a resilient manner to the treatment of covid19, while ensuring that humanitarian and recovery assistance reaches those most in need. With everyone around the world rallying round in solidarity and support for breakthrough medical interventions like vaccinations for all particularly in the developing world like Africa, we would be able to tackle the effect of the pandemic like world food shortages and continue to make giant strides towards rapid development in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda which is to eradicate poverty in all its forms globally and achieve sustainable livelihood for all.

INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY FROM COVID19: AFRICAN REGION

While there have been fewer cases of Covid19 in the African Region, there is evidence of exponential spread and the concern is that the speed of spread occasioned by high poverty rates, densely populated and overpopulated cities with many living in slums, high level of corrupt practices among leadership and the inability of our health systems to deal with a problem of this magnitude that includes weak preparedness to address and operate in public health emergencies. Africa and indeed many of the developing countries have encouraged the investment and inclusiveness by governments and the international community in tackling the Covid19. From two countries and two laboratories that could confirm diagnosis of this virus in early 2020, many African countries now have numerous numbers of laboratories and testing sites spreading out to small communities to reach those at the grassroots with the help of

the international community and international organizations like the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

Some of the challenges facing Africa are a high population of the older persons who are at greatest risk, a high demography of young people who are living with HIV/AIDS and a very high level of malnutrition among children under 5 years old. Due to the nature of Africa, social distancing is a challenge as a result of large populations of people living in slums and tightly packed accommodations. Access to water is often problematic making it quite challenging to recommend washing of hands with water. Many Africans live below poverty levels and may not be able to afford hand sanitizers on a regular basis.

The World Bank forecasted that in January 2021 the pandemic will result in an additional 10.9 million Nigerians entering poverty in 2022. The price of food, water and other essential amenities has increased sharply as a result of the pandemic. The Nigerian economy was practically vulnerable to the economic impact of covid19 due to the absence of a functioning social security system capable of providing support to households that lost jobs and income during the crises.

Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, noted in January 2021 that over 70% of people worldwide have no or only partial social security coverage. In Nigeria when covid19 hit, the government sought to scale up the partial existing social protection program distributing food and expanding a pre-existing cash transfer and market moni. But since there was an absence of a more robust social security register, these measures only reached a fraction of the people who have gone hungry during the covid19 pandemic. The covid19 pandemic had a devastating impact on livelihoods and access to food in the urban settlements as a five-week lockdown left some households struggling to feed while many saw their overall income fall.

In order to contain the virus, Governments around the world must work in solidarity and resilience to reduce the rapid spread and improve health care systems across the board. We are all in the pandemic together and can only work with mutual cooperation to end the surge.

COVID19 VACCINES

The Covid19 vaccine is a major breakthrough in the fight to end the pandemic and begin the process of rebuilding lives again in line with the UN 2030 goals of eradicating poverty and hunger while creating sustainable livelihood and wellbeing for all. In the case of the African Region, a large population of Africans have welcomed the development, and some have received their first dose of the ASTRAZENCA Vaccine. The big challenge however, is in the area of deployment and easy accessibility to the vaccines which needs to be accelerated in order to end the pandemic. Without the vaccines being readily available, the virus would continue to spread. A lot of training and awareness campaigns are needed to educate people on the effectiveness of the vaccine in ending the pandemic and keeping everyone safe again. Only in a safe world free of covid19 virus can people thrive and development towards the 2030 agenda be actualized.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Testing is an important way to diagnose Coronavirus. There are currently two primary types of COVID-19 tests namely diagnostic tests that look for active coronavirus infection in your mucus or saliva, and blood tests that hunt for antibodies. Some detect nucleic acid such as RNA belonging to the coronavirus. The Reverse Transcriptase – Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) is the most popular test available and is used to screen for the presence of RNA.

Antigen tests, by contrast cannot be used to detect current COVID-19 infection but instead to say whether a person has had the infection in the past. These tests are important in the understanding of infection rates in a population and are of epidemiological value. This kind of test is also useful given that many people are asymptomatic for the virus and may have been infected without knowing.

It is important to note that testing especially for travel provides information about a person's coronavirus status which helps to reduce the spread of the disease. With solidarity among all actors and the international community testing can be provided at reduced cost to the poorest countries in the world, particularly in Africa.

THE UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is a universal call to action to eradicate poverty, provide sustainable livelihoods, wellbeing, and dignity for all, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Recognizing that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability, the United Nations encourages all countries to commit to prioritize progress for those who are furthest behind. This ties in with the present fight to end the Covid19 pandemic and the resilience shown by the international community to rally wealthier countries to support the less developed countries with testing and vaccines for all. To achieve these goals:

- Governments around the world should have a direct public policy that have a positive impact on the people during and after Covid19.
 - There should be a major focus on Africa in helping to develop, provide and distribute vaccines.
 - There should be a well-informed media role.
 - There should be an enhanced public health response.
 - Emphasis should be on jobs creation.
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