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# **JOINT UNITED NATIONS COVID- 19 SOCIO- ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY FRAMEWORK**

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UNITED NATIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

This document was produced under the coordination of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bahrain, in consultation with the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, with contributions by the following United Nations entities working in Bahrain.

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# Table of Contents

## **Part I. Introduction**

COVID-19 in Bahrain	1
Socio-economic implications	2

## **Part II. UN Joint Framework**

1. Health First	5
2. Protecting People	8
3. Economic Response and Recovery	13
4. Macroeconomic Impact and Multilateral Collaboration	16
5. Social Cohesion and Community Resilience	18

## **Part III. Recovering Better** 21

Annex 1: Government of Bahrain Response Actions	22
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# INTRODUCTION

In April 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General presented the [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#). Based on the report, [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity](#), the framework provides a blueprint for the UN's urgent socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> Responding to this call to action, and taking into account the national priorities, policies, needs, and capacities within and outside the UN system, UN Country Teams are generating national-level Frameworks. According to the global document, these national efforts are to be “undertaken under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, with support from UNDP as technical lead, and the UN Country Teams working as one across all facets of the response”.

The United Nations in Bahrain has leveraged the UN's global initiative by generating this *Joint UN Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Bahrain* (hereafter, Joint Framework). This document builds on the *United Nations Response Offer (UNRO)* issued in April, which offered a set of 40 service actions by 18 UN entities, to complement the Government of Bahrain's immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic on an on-demand basis.

The overall objective of this *Joint Framework* is to outline a set of evidence-based and needs-driven actions, to support Government efforts to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The actions included in this framework represent efforts to mobilize the

UN's national, regional, and global expertise and technical partnerships in coordination with national authorities. The *Joint Framework* highlights *response* actions (i.e. rapid and designed to support Bahrain's immediate efforts) and *recovery* actions (i.e. mid- to long-term interventions), intended to support Bahrain's broader efforts to ‘recover better’, while remaining focused on Bahrain's strategic objectives for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>2</sup>

Our shared goal is to contribute to minimizing the impact of COVID-19 on the population in Bahrain and to support an efficient, inclusive and effective response to the pandemic itself and its aftermath. In the context of these extraordinary circumstances, and in full recognition that the Government and national actors are in the lead, UN agencies (both resident and non-resident) worked closely together to prepare this *Joint Framework*, and stand ready as a coordinated United Nations to respond to any request for support by the Government.

## COVID-19 in Bahrain

COVID-19 was first reported in the Arab region at the end of January 2020, and in a matter of weeks severely impacted societies and economies already grappling with conflict, security concerns and fiscal stresses.<sup>3</sup> The first cases of COVID-19 in Bahrain were detected on 24 February. As of July 6, in Bahrain there are 4,621 active cases and 97 deaths.<sup>4</sup> More than 602,151 tests have been conducted, and Bahrain continues to implement strict mitigation measures to address the spread of COVID-19 (see *Annex 1*).

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<sup>1</sup> See [United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better](#) for an overview of the UN response to COVID-19

<sup>2</sup> ‘Recover better’ is a term used and advocated by the UN Secretary General and UN funds and programmes to highlight the opportunity that the COVID-19 response offers to all countries to reconsider models of socio-economic development. This would put greater emphasis on policies and stimulus measures to enhance resilience and efficiency, including circular and green economy, climate action, more robust environmental policies and addressing priority transboundary issues that can all contribute to anticipating, preventing, and mitigating future pandemics. UN, Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, Report of the Secretary General, March 2020.

<sup>3</sup> DERASAT, Implications of the Coronavirus Crisis: An Economic Outlook, April 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Health, Bahrain, <https://www.moh.gov.bh/>

## Socio-economic implications

While the Government of Bahrain has responded efficiently in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, the scale of the pandemic is expected to generate increasing socio-economic disruptions, affecting the economy and people's everyday lives. As noted in the recent UN Secretary General's report, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19*, beyond the immediate health-related dimensions of COVID-19, the world is being confronted by falling commodity prices, loss of jobs, decreasing labour income, the gap in classroom teaching and youth, disruption in food production and distribution, and the effects of isolation on vulnerable groups of population.

The gendered impact of the pandemic on women and girls, for example, was highlighted by the SG in his policy brief on the [Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#). COVID-19 has caused unprecedented socio-economic turmoil that must be addressed in response and recovery efforts around the world. The pandemic is expected to have first and second order effects on the SDGs implementation (See *Figure 2*).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts GDP per capita *growth* will decline by -4.9% in 2020, worse than during the 2009 global financial crisis. While growth is predicted to rebound to over 5% in 2021, this assumes a fading of the pandemic in the second half of 2020, reduced control measures, a 'normalization' of economic activity, and restored consumer and investor confidence. The economic disruption and ongoing supply and demand shocks mean that global GDP at the end of 2021 is expected to remain below the pre-virus baseline of January 2020.<sup>5</sup>

In Bahrain, the Government acted swiftly to implement measures to contain the spread of the disease and to provide fiscal and monetary stimulus. On 17 March, the Government announced a BHD 4.3bn (USD \$11.4b) economic package to support the country's citizens and residents and absorb the shock to the economy.<sup>6</sup> The package includes a range of measures, including payment of salaries of all Bahraini private sector employees, exemption of all individuals and businesses from municipal fees, industrial land rental fees and tourism-related levies, for example.

With respect to the broader social impact, COVID-19 is likely to aggravate vulnerabilities for at-risk groups, including, low income and female-headed households, children and adults with disabilities, unemployed persons, particularly women and young people, and vulnerable migrant workers with limited access to health and other social protection services. So far, economic relief and stimulus measures introduced by the Government have for the most part provided social protection benefits to Bahraini citizens.<sup>7</sup> Bahrain, however, hosts over 600,000 migrant workers,<sup>8</sup> and while further support measures are under discussion, large numbers of non-citizen and migrant workers, who account for about 75% of the labour force, may be affected, particularly in fields such as health-care and nursing, construction, retail, hotel and hospitality industries, several of which have large numbers of female workers.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, layoffs of migrant workers could trigger the expiration of visas or work permits, forcing workers into undocumented or irregular status. In addition, the lack of income security creates an incentive to work while sick, inviting further spread of the virus.

<sup>5</sup> (1) IMF, World Economic Report: *The Great Lockdown*, April 2020, 6-7; (2) UN, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, Report of the Secretary General, March 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Bahrain News Agency, [Government of Bahrain announces BHD 4.3 billion economic stimulus package](#), dld March 2020.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank and ILO, Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures: A "living paper", March 27, 2020; UN in Bahrain, internal review of.

<sup>8</sup> BHDR, *ibid.*, 205. 218.

<sup>9</sup> Bahrain Human Development Report (BHDR), *ibid.*, 2018, 214.



Fig 2. COVID-19 impact on different SDGs



## UN JOINT FRAMEWORK

For countries around the world, the pandemic has become a stark reminder of the importance of international coordination, effective public sector performance and decisions based on best available data and international standards, and the need to protect those most vulnerable to the disease, so that no one is left behind. It is with this in mind that the global *UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19* was published in April 2020,<sup>10</sup> providing a strategy and blueprint for the urgent socio-economic response to the pandemic, underpinned by “a strong environmental sustainability and gender equality imperative to recover better”.

The *UN Framework*, which follows a 12-18 month timeframe, is one of three critical components of the global UN’s efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better – alongside the health response, led by the WHO, and the humanitarian response, as detailed in the UN-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

The global Framework consists of five streams of work.<sup>11</sup> Focusing on both the response and recovery phases in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, this *Joint Framework* aligns the UN’s ongoing support efforts in Bahrain with the five workstreams set out above. Within each of these workstreams, contextual analysis on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 is presented and is followed by proposed agency-specific support activities divided into (i) *response* and (ii) *recovery*.

The proposed *response* activities represent support that the UN in Bahrain has the immediate capacity to offer, while the



Fig 3. Five workstreams of the UN Framework

proposed *recovery* activities represent mid- and long-term support informed by emerging best practices in the global fight against COVID-19.<sup>12</sup> Analysis and activities are supplemented with a concluding note on how COVID-19 will inform Bahrain’s broader developmental priorities and outline how the UNDS can support its efforts to ‘recover better’. While responding directly to the COVID-19 crisis in the Kingdom, this *Joint Framework* is informed by, and aligns with, both the *Government Action Plan 2019-2022* and the *Government of Bahrain & United Nations Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018-2022*.

<sup>10</sup> [A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19](#), April 2020.

<sup>11</sup> These five streams are connected by a strong environmental sustainability and gender equality imperative to build back better.

<sup>12</sup> In all cases, it is prerogative of the Government of Bahrain to make final decisions on uptake and engagement on specific offers of support.



## HEALTH FIRST: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis

### Context

The UNDS is providing support to every government in the world in the health field, from specialized technical advice and early warning to large scale service delivery operations in fragile settings. In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNDS is prioritizing support to countries to maintain essential health services and the systems that support them. Specific areas of response by the UNDS to assist Governments in maintaining essential health services and systems include:

- Providing analytical and policy support, and rapid technical guidance
- Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations
- Programme implementation and technical support

While the COVID-19 pandemic is placing health systems and services under tremendous strain around the world, Bahrain has responded well, and has so far demonstrated capacity to manage the pandemic without risking system collapse. The impact of COVID-19 is multipronged. First, the rapidly spreading infection causes a huge burden on health care facilities, particularly specialized services such as intensive care; overwhelming the health care system and increasing mortality due to the infection. The overwhelmed health care system becomes less effective in dealing with

other acute health care problems, that it would normally deal with effectively, resulting in above trend mortality from other health problems. Utilization of routine health care services also becomes affected, not only because the health system is suffering under the burden of COVID-19, but also because beneficiaries of the system are afraid to get their routine services out of fear of contracting the infection. This reduced utilization can affect immunization rates, follow up of chronic health conditions, maternal services, etc. This in turn worsens health indicators in the future due outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases, uncontrolled non-communicable diseases, maternal mortalities, etc.

The importance of COVID-19 mitigation measures therefore is not only that it prevents contracting the virus by individuals in the population thus saving their lives, but also, protects the health care system from being overwhelmed by large numbers of patients in a short span of time, thus preventing its collapse. The early adoption of mitigation measures, their extent, and the coordination and whole of government approach among the various national stakeholders have contributed enormously to controlling the spread of the novel corona virus. The role of the population in implementing the mitigation measures is of paramount importance in the successful control of COVID-19.



## Response

Support	Agency
Provide technical guidance, standard protocols and guidelines, on all aspects of the COVID-19 prevention, control and management such as testing, isolation, clinical management	WHO
Coordinate international research in order to identify the most effective medications for the treatment of COVID-19 (the solidarity study) where Bahrain was the first Arab country to participate	WHO
Continue support for other health care functions and programmes to maintain quality of health services and health gains achieved over the past decades, for example: antimicrobial resistance, fighting the tobacco epidemic, adolescent health, mental health, etc.	WHO
Procurement services of health products, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and laboratory equipment required for national COVID-19 responses	UNDP IOM
Supply of a real time reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction (real time RT-PCR) machine with diagnosis kits and personnel protective equipment	IAEA
Support on environmentally sound health waste management (practices, guidelines) to reduce the level of exposure while limiting the environmental impact of such waste	UNEP
Deployment of national and international health care specialists, professionals and workers (doctors, nurses, lab tech) and activation of volunteer networks	UNV IOM
Provision of non-medical requirements of health sector, which could relate to any aspect of the overall response, such as vehicles, computers, communications, etc.	UNDP
Provide training on the equipment to enhance the QC/QA of the diagnosis at IAEA's laboratory at Seibersdorf, Austria as soon travel restrictions are eased	IAEA
Provide training on the prevention and control of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, in prisons and other closed/detention settings in accordance with international standards and best practices	UNODC
Provide training on ensuring continuity of care for people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders in accordance with international standards and best practices	UNODC
Provide training on the assessment and management of corruption risks related to the procurement of medicines and medical supplies	UNODC
Provide support for the assessment and management of corruption risks related to the procurement of medicines and medical supplies	UNODC
Provide training on law enforcement responses to evolving and emerging threats pertaining to illicit trafficking in drugs and precursors as well as medical supplies	UNODC
Share the Health Sendai Framework Factsheet in Arabic	UNDRR

In line with IOM's Toolkit and using previous models developed for other contexts such as recent Ebola outbreaks, build the capacity of health care workers and other actors on psychological first aid adapted for pandemics	IOM
Support the development of Point of Entry specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) for detection, notification, isolation, management and referral, including the development of training curricula and manuals	IOM
Provide training immigration and border/port health staff on management of ill travellers and on best practices on infection prevention and control	IOM

## Recovery

Support	Agency
Conduct an "After Action Review" as part of the International Health Regulations monitoring and evaluation framework, to learn from our experiences and how to improve our performance in the future	WHO
Conduct research to identify underlying factors for social behaviour observed, and for outcomes achieved	WHO
Catch up with services and programmes affected as a result of the epidemic and bring them back to pre-epidemic levels such immunization services, elective surgeries, non-communicable diseases monitoring and control	WHO
Support for the analysis of Covid-19 impact among people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders to inform the update of the national drug control strategy	UNODC
Support for the analysis of Covid-19 impact among people in prisons and other closed/detention settings to further inform health strategies in prisons	UNODC OHCHR
Address Medical Waste during COVID-19 and post within the developed Waste Management Strategy	UNEP

# 2



## PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basic services

### Context

Beyond the immediate health dimensions of the pandemic, COVID-19 is aggravating a range of existing and emerging risks that may negatively affect Bahrain's development trajectory, its ability to make progress towards the SDGs and address the needs of vulnerable groups. Although compared to its Gulf neighbours, case numbers have so far remained relatively low in Bahrain, COVID-19 poses an ongoing threat that necessitates broad mitigation responses in terms not only of the immediate health dimensions, but also the socio-economic dimensions of this unfolding crisis, including the potential to slow momentum on Bahrain's advances in this sphere.

The UNDS is the world's largest international actor on social protection and basic services and has extensive expertise and experience in supporting governments in developing inclusive and integrated social protection systems, including social protection floors and delivery of quality social services. From supporting innovative learning modalities to leveraging the strong partnerships that exists in the system by working with national authorities, civil society organizations (including women-led CSOs) and the private sector, to ensure that basic essential services are maintained, the UNDS is well-positioned to support a people-centred response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The UNDS recognizes that the pandemic has also been a severe shock to families and children and those who serve them – presenting challenges in the continuity of education, affecting health-seeking behaviors

such as routine immunization, additional stress on families resulting in increased concerns around mental health, as well as the additional anxiety being felt by caregivers, children, adolescents, and front line social and health care workers.

As the pandemic evolves, new and differing messages will need to be disseminated appropriately within families, communities, and society to sustain the public health response. The UNDS stands ready to support in addressing the quality of services in support of children and families. In addition, the UNDS recognizes that the pandemic is necessitating improvements in social services – from a renewed focus on preventing and responding to violence against children and families brought about by extended periods of isolation to the opportunities that exist around the digitization of social services. The UNDS can both support the capacity development needs requested by Government but also share Bahrain's successes in responding to the pandemic with the rest of the world.

The UNDS is committed to the overarching principle of *leaving no one behind*; ensuring special measures are taken to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. *Leaving no one behind* is a foundational principle of Agenda 2030, which was adopted by Bahrain and the global community in 2015. COVID-19 will inevitably aggravate vulnerabilities for already at-risk groups, including, for example, low income and female-headed households, children and adults with disabilities, unemployed persons, particularly women and young people, and vulnerable migrant workers with limited access to health and other social protection services. Migrants are not

inherently more vulnerable to, or at heightened risk of, contracting infectious diseases. Rather, it is the conditions in which they live or work that influence or compound health risks, including access to appropriate health services. As elsewhere in the GCC, and in large part due to densely populated labour accommodations typical of the region, migrant workers in Bahrain are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. Migrants are furthermore likely to be employed in daily-wage, short-term, or precarious work in the informal economy, often with limited provision for, or fear of seeking access to, social protection, adequate food, housing, health and social services. Many face increasing situations of loss of employment and wages, health vulnerability and protection risks, exclusion and discrimination. Furthermore, as an immediate impact, travel restrictions and border closures have left thousands of migrants stranded, in need of assistance and in often precarious situations. The Government of Bahrain has taken positive steps towards providing assistance to migrant communities through the provision of the following:

- Launching an Amnesty Programme that allows migrants to regularize their status or voluntarily return to their countries of origin
- Waiving of work permit renewal fees for a period of three months to encourage employers to retain workers;
- Launching a talent portal to match workers that have been laid-off due to the pandemic with employers that were unable to recruit migrant workers due to closure of borders;
- Extension of visit visas until 31 December 2020 to prevent any migrant from falling into an irregular status

The UNDS is well positioned to utilize the experience of its specialized agencies to build on the positive work of the Government and further enhance protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants in Bahrain.

The COVID-19 pandemic also poses additional challenges for Bahrain's efforts to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment, and to protect women:<sup>13 14</sup>

- The majority of health care and social workers are women and face increased risks of infection with COVID-19
- Women and girls are called-upon to provide the lion's share of unpaid care (4.7 times more than men), especially for sick family members
- Women are expected to be disproportionately affected to job losses in the Arab States region
- Female domestic workers, nearly all of whom are migrants are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 infection as they may be excluded from social protection benefits and life-saving health information and health services
- There are concerns that increased family isolation and reduced access to social services may increase vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence and hinder the provision of essential services to survivors

To reach vulnerable groups and respond to their needs effectively, it will be critical to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including women-led CSOs, to reflect their priorities and experience, and integrate their leadership in the national response.

<sup>13</sup> UNESCWA, [The impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality in the Arab Region](#). E/ESCWA/2020/Policy Brief.4, March 2020.

<sup>14</sup> UNFPA: *Covid-19: A Gender Lens* <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/covid-19-gender-lens>

## Response

Support	Agency
Based on the situation of persons of concern, prompt response to meet the needs of the most vulnerable by providing cash assistance and advice	UNHCR
Support the Government with developing protocols for medically enhanced voluntary returns of foreign workers who are in detention or wish to return as part of the amnesty programme	IOM UNODC
Development and support in operationalizing protocols for the establishment and management of temporary accommodation facilities for foreign workers in support to the Government efforts to decongest labour accommodations	IOM
Support to local governments to improve hygiene and sanitation providing remote guidance on upgrading neighbourhood water usage, waste management, and guidance on community led initiatives to build urban resilience	UN-HABITAT
Rapid situational assessment of COVID-19 impact on food systems and food security, with secondary data and in-depth virtual interviews, to assess food supply and availability, domestic supply chains, and impact on most marginalized groups.	FAO
Survey for impact assessment of COVID-19 on the operation of the National Meteorology and Hydrology Services and its capability to cope	WMO
Gender mainstreamed assessment and monitoring of COVID-19 impact on vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, victims of trafficking in persons, and vulnerable migrant workers (data collection support via different means), children who may be in detention	UNODC ILO ESCWA UNICEF IOM
Support on 2020 population census, including mixed methods, online surveys, civil registry to overcome delays	UNFPA
One day virtual workshop with Government counterparts on 'Recovering Better' (with panels on Digital Development, Green Economy, for example)	RCO (with UN agencies)
Guidance and support on distance learning and to communicate on the virus, to teachers, learners and parents	UNESCO UNICEF ESCWA
Development of multi-sector stakeholders' capacity for the provision of essential services (health, police and justice, social services and coordination/referral among these services) to victims of gender-based violence against women and girls (GBVAWG) both during and beyond the pandemic	UNFPA UNODC ESCWA UNICEF
Support the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners in responding to crime while upholding the rights of victims both during the pandemic and in the aftermath, with focus on domestic violence, gender-based violence, violence against children, hate crime, and trafficking in persons	UNODC
Provide technical advice and tools on emergency alert and public warning, offered through on-line training courses (Common Alert Protocol)	WMO
Provide technical assistance to the Government to strengthen existing measures in place to provide health care for foreign workers in an irregular status	IOM ESCWA

Provide training to frontline workers to understand the impact of COVID-19 and its determinants of vulnerability of foreign workers, to identify the most vulnerable in need of further assistance and psychological first aid	IOM
Capacity building to border officials on the safest and most effective measures to gradually ease travel restrictions, through disease surveillance and cross border cooperation	IOM
Support the critical protection mechanisms and responses to stranded migrants, including facilitating voluntary return to vulnerable groups.	IOM
Support the creation of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support self-help tools specifically tailored for stranded migrant populations in quarantine	IOM
Support on monitoring and reporting on House, Land and Property (HLP) issues, including eviction cases with the aim of capturing surges, particularly among vulnerable migrant groups, and develop protective measures such as moratoriums on evictions and rental support.	IOM
UN COVID-19 Webinar Series - <i>Lessons Learned: Arab States Cities Preparedness and Response to COVID 19</i> (UNDRR) - <i>UN Women</i>	RCO (with UN agencies)
Risk communication materials and advocacy briefs on prevention and response to COVID-19, tailored to needs (including <i>Prevention saves Lives UNDRR Campaign</i> )	UNICEF UNHCR UNDRR
Communications and outreach support, with emphasis on gendered impact of COVID-19 on women and girls	UN Women UNICEF
Remote awareness-raising sessions on implementing human rights-based approach for responding to COVID-19 outbreak	OHCHR
Information session on human rights and migrant workers (covering themes including, access to health facilities, goods and services, the right to decent work and social protection, right to education etc.)	OHCHR
Guidance and tips to ensure children and families maintain healthy lifestyles including sustaining optimal nutrition practices	UNICEF
Amplify messages and advocacy materials through our social media platforms and other channels, in collaboration with the Government of Bahrain.	UNESCO UNDP RCO
Guidance for NGOs focused on adolescents/young people and those working with children with disabilities	UNICEF UNHCR
Public advocacy and policy support in relation to protecting and upholding the rights of vulnerable groups through responses to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 (e.g., prisoners, victims of trafficking, victims of violence, irregular migrants, drug users)	UNODC IOM (and other agencies)
Information and guidance for parents and teachers, including guidance on parenting during COVID-19	UNESCO UNICEF ESCWA UNODC



## Recovery

Support	Agency
Strengthen the capacity of the MLSD and social partners for promoting workplace preparedness and response to emergencies and infections, including COVID-19, through improved OSH and promoted compliance with the national legislation.	ILO
Promote the use of modern technology in labour inspection and OSH for improving the relevant data and statistics, in terms of quantity and quality, in a sex-disaggregated manner.	ILO
Support the collaboration and coordination between the criminal justice system and other relevant ministries and entities, particularly in the field of education and labour, to support the social reintegration of prisoners (by offering TVET and/or work programmes in prisons that may increase offenders' prospects of acquiring skillsets matching the needs of the labour market)	UNODC
Support the capacity of the prison system to implement TVET and/or work programmes for offenders in prisons that are aligned with the labour market's needs and in accordance with international standards, norms and best practices	UNODC
Engage Bahrain with the UNDRR COVID-19 Webinar Series: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>"Cities Recovery and Build Back Better (BBB) after COVID 19"</i></li> <li>2. UNDRR Regional Capacity Building platforms for Arab Partnership Meeting</li> </ol>	UNDRR
Support the national effort to re-open schools with appropriate attention to hygiene practices, safety, child protection, mental health support, and capacity development of teachers and school management.	UNICEF UNESCO
Support to strengthen child protection systems, including case management and referral, strengthening front line services, and trainings of the social work force to address children's vulnerability to abuse, exploitation, psychological distress, mental wellbeing, protection while online.	UNICEF
Capacity building for the government's online learning system (LMS)	UNESCO

# 3



## ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector workers

### Context

The COVID-19 crisis is plunging the world economy into a recession with historical levels of unemployment and deprivation. While certain sectors and industries have successfully moved online, pointing the way towards exciting innovations in the world of work, at least 300 million workers have lost their livelihoods and many more remain at risk. Hence, this pandemic is not just a health crisis, but is also a jobs and livelihoods crisis.

In Bahrain, as elsewhere, the pandemic has caused major socio-economic disruptions and threatens the steady progress that Bahrain has made toward achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government of Bahrain has implemented several measures to provide fiscal and monetary stimulus. On 17 March, the Government announced a BHD 4.3bn (USD \$11.4b) economic package to counteract the supply, demand, and unemployment shocks that have accompanied social distancing, lockdowns, and reduced travel, trade, and commerce.<sup>15</sup> The response stimulus package contains the following measures for a period of three months from April 2020:<sup>16</sup>

- *Payment of salaries of all Bahraini private sector employees in line with the amended Social Insurance Law;*
- *Payment of water and electricity charges for individuals and businesses;*

- *Payment of water and electricity charges for individuals and businesses*
- *Exemption of all individuals and businesses from municipal fees, industrial land rental fees and tourism-related levies;*
- *Doubling the Liquidity Support Fund to BHD 200 million (USD \$530 million);*
- *Increase of the Central Bank of Bahrain's loan facilities to BHD 3.7bn (USD \$9.8 bn) to allow debt instalments and credit card balances to be deferred with no interest for six months (starting March 2020); and*
- *Redirection of all Tamkeen programmes (loans and assistance to businesses) to support adversely affected companies, as well as the restructuring of all debts issued by Tamkeen.*

SMEs will be among some of the hardest hit by the economic impacts of COVID-19. Urgent stimulus measures to support SMEs and avoid extensive unemployment are important, and Bahrain is well-placed, relative to its peers in the region, to adjust to this new reality. The stimulus package includes measures to help SMEs defer debt payments, interest free and Tamkeen programmes are being redirected to support adversely affected companies.

Bahrain was already in the process of taking positive steps towards subsidy reform, in line with the [Fiscal Balance Programme](#), to reduce its budget deficit and increase the effectiveness of social sector spending.<sup>17</sup> These efforts, however,

<sup>15</sup> Bahrain News Agency, [Government of Bahrain announces BHD 4.3 billion economic stimulus package](#), dld March 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Unofficial UN summary of Government of Bahrain BHD 4.3 billion [economic stimulus package](#), dld March 2020. See also: Law No. (8) of 2020 with regards to Unemployment Insurance <https://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/LegislationSearchDetails.aspx?id=15198#>

<sup>17</sup> For example: An increase in electricity and water costs for non-Bahrainis (and Bahrainis with more than one property) – to help generate government revenue; The introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) at a standard rate of 5%; Pension reforms, including for public servants, to make pensions more financially sustainable (for the government); A voluntary retirement scheme for government employees to help curb rising expenditure on public sector wages (which account for a significant proportion of government expenditure).

will be greatly challenged by the need for economic stimulus and increased social protection spending to address the urgent, negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, notwithstanding these challenges, fiscal stimulus in response to COVID-19 present an opportunity for ground-breaking efforts to respond to the needs of groups at risk of marginalisation, as a result of the crisis, such as women and youth, people with disabilities and migrant workers.

Furthermore, and based on lessons learned from other health crises, one of the major identified challenges posed by emergency measures is that Member States may necessarily relax safeguards by trading compliance, oversight and accountability for speed of response and achievement of rapid impact, thus unwittingly leading to the creation of significant opportunities for corruption to thrive<sup>18</sup>. This in turn increases the risk that corruption and fraud may weaken the impact of the measures being taken and result in a shortfall of desperately needed aid reaching the intended beneficiaries, impacting the most vulnerable among the population.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, COVID-19 will have negative impacts on remittance flows that may be more severe than during the financial crisis of 2008, and it will come just as recipient countries are grappling with the impact of COVID-19 on their own economies. Migrant workers who lose their employment are likely to reduce remittances to their families back

home. In fact, according to the World Bank, remittance flows are expected to drop by about \$100 billion in 2020, which represents roughly a 20 percent drop from their 2019 level.<sup>20</sup> In this scenario, trade balances will be affected, and countries' ability to finance and service their debt will be reduced.

More specifically, global economic slowdown due to COVID-19 as well as the oil price decline will considerably affect remittance outflows from GCC countries, including Bahrain. World Bank noted remittances to South Asia are projected to decline by 22% to \$109bn in 2020. The projected fall in remittances follows the growth of 6.1% in 2019, World Bank noted. Remittances outflow from Bahrain by the end of 2019 amounted to about 1.09 billion dinars.

Restricted movement during COVID-19 crisis has also contributed to a decrease in remittance outflows as well as difficulties to collect remittances in recipient countries. Efforts predating COVID-19 shows that Bahrain had already invested in digital remittance channels as in April 2018, and Bahrain FinTech Bay was established and designed to become a pioneering fintech hub in the Middle East and North Africa. This investment in digital technology has benefitted migrants in the country and the UNDS is well positioned to further support Bahrain's commitment to this area.

## Response

Support	Agency
Promote interventions to ensure support for the business sector, including the protection of migrant (non-national) workers in the private sector, based on international and regional good practices	ILO
Support and protect employment and income of women and disadvantaged groups working in most COVID-19-affected sectors (healthcare services, agriculture, and SMEs), jointly with Government, employers and workers	ILO ESCWA

<sup>18</sup> Corruption itself may or may not exist, yet the corruption risk always exists. Moreover, addressing the risk of corruption often has the side effect of increasing efficiency.

<sup>19</sup> UNODC, *Accountability and the prevention of corruption in the allocation and distribution of emergency economic rescue packages in the context and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic*, 6 April 2020. Key lessons learned from the Ebola crisis: <https://www.unodc.org/publications/ebola-and-corruptionovercoming-critical-governance-challenges-in-a-crisis-situation>.

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history>

Support SMEs and the private sector through (ARISE), the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies, which is a network of private sector entities led by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).	ARISE–UNDRR
Development of virtual business counselling and SME surveys to support entrepreneurs and MSMEs	UNIDO UNDP
Contribute to a socio-economic impact assessment of the impact of COVID-19 in Bahrain, carrying out surveys, structured interviews, and multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions geared towards finding best solutions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the economy and society	UNDP (and other agencies)
Provide employability training and psychological counselling to young men and women through the pandemic (with health authorities)	UNFPA

## Recovery

Support	Agency
Ongoing analysis and discussion around measures for COVID-19 Socio Economic recovery	UNDP UNICEF (and other agencies)
Support for the development and regular update of comprehensive emergency response plans (based on scientific and economic models) that integrate contemporary analysis of corruption risks	UNODC (and other agencies)
Support for enhancing public-private collaboration and partnerships on the recovery efforts	UN Global Compact UNODC (and other agencies)
Increased institutional capacity of employer and business membership organizations	ILO
Support the monitoring of the economic and social measures aimed at supporting businesses and providing improved social protection, to assess whether adequate support is provided for the most vulnerable groups	OHCHR
Advocate for the implementation of good practices for the mitigation of the economic and other impacts of the outbreak, particularly social security and preparedness measures.	OHCHR
Review how ongoing projects with the Ministry of Works, Municipality Affairs and Urban Planning (on food security, aquaculture, statistics and animal disease) can contribute to COVID-19 recovery.	FAO
Support the development and scaling up of digital remittance channels for migrants and families	IOM UNDP

Enhancing commitment and capacity of employers and labour recruiters to protect migrant workers, by identifying and disseminating good practices, strengthening dialogue and coordination between recruiters and employers, and stimulating business action in global supply chains to effectively protect migrant worker health, well-being and rights.

IOM



## MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

### Context

COVID-19 is wreaking havoc on already weak economies through containment measures put in place to control its spread. Mitigation measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 through quarantines, travel restrictions and closures of non-essential businesses have resulted in a significant reduction in aggregate demand, with impacts on service sectors such as tourism, retail, hospitality, and civil aviation. They have also led to disrupted labour markets and supply chains. This unprecedented crisis requires unprecedented measures—a massive counter-cyclical fiscal and financial effort is urgently needed everywhere.

For 2020, the World Bank has forecast a decline in real GDP growth for the GCC area of -0.4% and for Bahrain of -2.5%.<sup>21</sup> For the Arab region overall, initial estimates of the pandemic's impacts in 2020 include: a loss of \$11 billion in net oil revenues,

aggravated by an oil price war,<sup>22</sup> a decline in exports by \$28 billion, 1.7 million fewer jobs, and heightened vulnerabilities for migrant workers and women who comprise the majority of health care workers and care providers.<sup>23</sup>

Maintaining sustainable economic growth, business development, and employment creation for citizens will be a challenge within existing budgetary constraints. Most critical is the sustainability of public finance. Government debt reached USD \$32 bn in February 2020 (BHD 12.1 bn) or about 83% of GDP.<sup>24</sup> Emergency fiscal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and depressed oil prices will have major consequences for Bahrain's fiscal balance and credit rating.<sup>25</sup> Current fiscal policy in Bahrain involves increased borrowing to offset lower revenues from oil as well as rapid diversification of the non-oil sector (growing at an annual rate of 2.5%, down from 4.9% a year earlier).<sup>26</sup> On April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Government announced a 30 per cent reduction in spending by ministries and government agencies as a precautionary response to the COVID-19

<sup>21</sup> World Bank, MENA Economic Update, April 2020.9-10.

<sup>22</sup> In early April, OPEC and its oil producing partners agreed to reduce production by 9.7 million barrels per day. However, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has reported a drop in demand as of April of 29 million barrels per day, or about one-third of pre-COVID consumption. In this context, it is unlikely that current cuts will be sufficient to stabilise prices. [IEA Oil Market Report](#), April 2020.

<sup>23</sup> UNESCWA, Regional Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19, 25 March 2020;

<sup>24</sup> 'Bahrain Government Debt', at CEIC <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/bahrain/national-government-debt>

<sup>25</sup> Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, Standard & Poor's reported Bahrain's credit rating as stable at (B+/B) with 'high risk'. Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, [The Economic Impact of Coronavirus March 2020](#), dld April 2020.

<sup>26</sup> GoB Ministry of Finance and National Economy: Bahrain Economic Quarterly Q1 2019: <https://www.mofne.gov.bh/Files/cdoc/FI1038-BEQ%20Eng%204Q2018%20v13.pdf>

outbreak.<sup>27</sup> High fiscal deficits and growing debt to GDP ratios led the Government to implement a [Fiscal Balance Programme](#) (FBP).<sup>28</sup> Efforts are being made to reduce the generous subsidy regime which was reported to have increased by 73% by 2015, to BHD 1.126bn (\$2.99bn) per year.<sup>29</sup> Subsidy reform measures have included cuts to water and electricity subsidies, removal of meat subsidies, pension reforms, and the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in international confidence in Bahrain's economy with foreign direct investment (FDI) at USD \$1.5bn in 2018<sup>30</sup> compared to \$65m in 2008.<sup>31</sup> In 2019, the Bahrain Stock Market notched the highest gains among Arab stock markets with a 20% gain, doubling the next highest performer, Dubai.<sup>32</sup> Other sources of financing that could be leveraged for SDG-related investment include portfolio equity which was USD \$1.2bn in 2013.<sup>33</sup> While the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to significantly reduce capital flows and investor confidence in 2020, these should recover as the pandemic fades in the second half of the year.

Based on information currently available at international level, the economic impact of COVID-19 creates major criminal risks for Governments to address. As economies try to recover, professional money launderers will seek to grow their business. Other organized criminals will offer high-risk

financial services, especially in areas where traditional governmental and private sector capabilities have been reduced. Money laundering remains a core enabler of COVID-19-related transnational organized crime, with a tangible increase in fraud.<sup>34</sup>

Prospects for Bahrain are good overall, buttressed by the Fiscal Balance Programme (FBP). Initiated in 2018, the \$10 billion budgetary support package from GCC partners: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE is aimed at significantly boosting Bahrain's economy, and will be used in part to finance large-scale infrastructure and service projects.

Beyond national statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic is by definition a transboundary concern and is affecting the effective functioning of every sector in the region, and indeed the world. Bahrain's response will require much greater regional and international cooperation on matters including surveillance; rapid response and case investigation; monitoring and controlling border entry points (while not stifling flows of essential workers and commodities, including personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers); and effective communication and coordination with international laboratories.<sup>35</sup> Regional cooperation, particularly amongst the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), is an important consideration for the Government and is critical for effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>27</sup> Middle East Monitor, Bahrain cuts spending by 30% to help battle coronavirus, April 21

<sup>28</sup> Government of Bahrain, Fiscal Balance Programme, 2019; (2) IMF, [IMF Staff Completes 2019 Article IV Mission to Bahrain](#) March 5, 2019; (3) [IMF Executive Board Concludes 2019 Article IV Consultation with the Kingdom of Bahrain](#), May 7, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Arabian Business, [IMF urges Bahrain to retarget subsidies, control spending](#), Friday, 28 March 2014. The lion's share of subsidies are for electricity and water, accounting for an estimated BHD 700m or 62% of the total subsidy bill. At the end of 2015 subsidies for meat were removed and further cuts are expected for both electricity and water subsidies. In addition, government bodies were asked to find budgetary savings of 30%. EIU, [Bahrain Country Report](#), Oct 28, 2015

<sup>30</sup> GoB Ministry of Finance and National Economy: Bahrain Economic Quarterly Q1 2019: <https://www.mofne.gov.bh/Files/cdoc/FI1038-BEQ%20Eng%204Q2018%20v13.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> 'Investments to hit \$650', *Gulf Daily News*, 29 October 2018, p2

<sup>32</sup> See: <https://www.bahrainbourse.com/marketperformance>, dld Jan 2020

<sup>33</sup> Development Initiatives, [Country Profile-Bahrain](#), dld Jan 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Potential negative macroeconomic consequences of unchecked money laundering may include inexplicable changes in money demand, prudential risks to bank soundness, contamination effects on legal financial transactions, and increased volatility of international capital flows and exchange rates due to unanticipated cross-border asset transfers. Also, as it rewards corruption and crime, successful money laundering damages the integrity of the entire society and undermines democracy and the rule of the law.

<sup>35</sup> WHO, [COVID-19 STRATEGY UPDATE](#), 14 April, 2020.



## Response

Support	Agency
Supporting information sharing on evolving and emerging threats related to illicit financial flows, particularly those associated with money laundering and the financing of terrorism	UNODC

## Recovery

Support	Agency
Strengthen multi-sector stakeholder capacity to address evolving and emerging threats related to illicit financial flows, particularly those associated with money laundering and the financing of terrorism	UNODC
Rebuild the next generation of social, ecological and productive infrastructure: support for sustainable infrastructure development rests on needs-based, integrated approaches across the entire infrastructure life cycle, from strategic planning, to financing, delivery, operations, and decommissioning.	UNEP
Analysis of economic diversification and sectoral competitiveness of Bahrain, as part of macro-economic analysis	ESCWA



## Context

Communities will bear the brunt of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. They also hold the key to flatten the curve, respond to the pandemic and ensure longer-term recovery. At the same time, just when that social capital — the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively — is at a premium, the pandemic will place considerable strains on social cohesion, magnifying existing fault lines and creating new ones. The impact of COVID-19 on the life

of urban communities and on vulnerable and marginalized populations is expected to be massive. As the capacity to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 will largely depend on local governments and tailored community-led solutions and responses, communities must be at the center of all efforts to strengthen social cohesion.

The participation of various sectors of society allows the authorities to deepen their understanding of specific issues; helping to

identify gaps, as well as available policy and legislative options and their impact on specific individuals and groups; and balances conflicting interests. As a consequence, decision-making is more informed and sustainable, and public institutions are more effective, accountable and transparent. This in turn enhances the legitimacy of states' decisions and their ownership by all members of society.<sup>36</sup>

The UNDS is a critical player in promoting community and urban resilience, providing a rights-based response to development, and supporting investments in empowered and resilient community-led response systems, working with and through a wide variety of stakeholders and tailored according to needs and context. At the national level such support might include:

- Leveraging the UN's networks and partnerships to bring together representatives of state institutions with a wide range of stakeholders such as civil

society organizations, , National Human Rights Institutions, women and youth activists, representatives of migrants and diaspora groups, faith based organizations and religious leaders, employers' organizations and business owners, trade unions, academia, think tanks and others to co-create recovery strategies

- Engaging culture entrepreneurs and practitioners to create spaces enabling communities to maintain social ties through artistic expressions
- Supporting national actors in the design of national and local responses that are gender and conflict-sensitive and strengthen social cohesion, trust and confidence

The protection and inclusion of migrant communities calls for further implementation of human rights centred measures, to promote cohesion and avoid hostile behaviors or attitudes, including through solidarity towards victims of discrimination.

## Response

Support	Agency
Promote social dialogue mechanisms (workers, government, businesses)	ILO ESCWA
Risk communication materials with anti-stigma messaging, tailored to different stakeholders including foreign workers communities and employers, to promote social cohesion and limit potential xenophobia rising	IOM
Communicate about the potential impact of policies implemented to contain the spread of Covid-19 such as lockdown measures on health and social cohesion / promote healthy behaviours/lifestyles in accordance with evidence internationally available relating to the prevention of drug use and crime at large)	UNODC (and other agencies)
Supporting the capacity of the criminal justice system and community-based organizations for the application of non-custodial measures and sentences (alternatives to imprisonment) towards addressing the rehabilitation and social reintegration needs of offenders and alleged offenders while upholding the rights of victims	UNODC

<sup>36</sup> For guidance on how to ensure participation, please refer to the Guidelines for States on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs: [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/PublicAffairs/GuidelinesRightParticipatePublicAffairs\\_web.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/PublicAffairs/GuidelinesRightParticipatePublicAffairs_web.pdf)

UNDRR ROAS and Arab States Science and Technology Advisory Group for DRR to share Policy Brief on role of Science and Technology in responding to COVID-19

UNDRR

## Recovery

Support	Agency
Support for the analysis of Covid-19 impact on various forms of victimization, with participation of communities (participatory approach), to inform community-led interventions and programmes targeted at vulnerable groups	UNODC (and other agencies)
Training on community-led/community-oriented interventions and programmes on drug use and crime prevention in accordance with international standards and best practices	UNODC
Promote access to information and digital inclusion through Media and Information Literacy (MIL) initiatives targeting the Youth	UNESCO
Webinar on 'Inclusive and innovative participation in cultural life'	UNESCO
Development of the Bahrain Digital Development Report, including analysis of how digital sector can advance inclusion and equality	ESCWA
Support the Government in holding constructive dialogue with all community in order to agree on a set of significant steps and reforms that meet the legitimate aspirations of all Bahrainis and on a realistic road map for the future.	OHCHR
Encourage authorities to mainstream public messages through the media and political statements on zero tolerance for Covid-19 related discrimination and support the government in preventing discrimination in line with human rights norms and standards	OHCHR
Provide technical assistance with alternative penalties provisions in accordance with international human rights standards.	OHCHR

## RECOVERING BETTER

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the world's fragilities, which extend far beyond the realm of global health. As one UN development system, and through the strengthened RC system, the UN's support is integrated, connecting analysis and responses across sectors, and building continuity between immediate measures and longer-term recovery. The support that UN Country Teams offer includes not only resident in-country capacities, but also relevant expertise sourced from other regional or global locations, including through Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs). Throughout the UN's response, the guiding reference remains the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its central promise to 'leave no one behind'.

The starting point must be what countries need and want to do. All around the world, the UNDS is supporting governments to make policy and programme choices that will efficiently and effectively meet the challenge of providing social and economic protection to people in need. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities for at-risk groups, and so one of the UN's critical roles is to support governments in mitigating the worst effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups through advocacy, training, capacity building and direct support. The unprecedented situation also brings with it an unprecedented opportunity to advocate for the empowerment of vulnerable groups; to champion efforts to integrate and include them in broader processes of socio-economic progress; to promote green investment; to prioritise digital development; to take concrete steps towards mitigating the devastating effects of climate change.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that as a global community our response will involve remaking and reimagining the very structures of societies and the ways in which countries cooperate for the common good. Coming out of this crisis will require a whole-of-society, whole-of-government and whole-of-the-world

approach driven by compassion and solidarity. Recovery is an opportunity to address inequality, exclusion, gaps in social protection systems, the climate crisis and the many other fragilities and injustices that have been exposed.

One of the central aims of this *Joint Framework* is to ensure that the socio-economic response to COVID-19 is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda. For this reason, the proposed activities have been designed to both contribute to and complement the four outcomes of the *United Nations Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018-2022*:

- **OUTCOME 1.** *Policies and frameworks are strengthened for the sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable energy, climate resilience, and enhanced food security*
- **OUTCOME 2.** *Strengthened social sector policies and systems improve the delivery of quality, inclusive services for Bahraini citizens and residents*
- **OUTCOME 3.** *Enhanced policies and regulatory frameworks strengthen conditions for economic diversification, employment creation, rule of law, and increased resilience and innovation.*
- **OUTCOME 4.** *The Kingdom of Bahrain plays an enhanced role in international and regional partnerships for sustainable development, including peace and security initiatives, and to expand South-South cooperation*

While the ongoing response to the human and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge for Bahrain, as elsewhere, the disruption caused by the crisis at the same time represents a meaningful opportunity to assess Bahrain's progress towards the SDGs, and to re-imagine how the UN and Bahrain can work together towards a sustainable future. We have an opportunity, in other words, to recover better; and it is toward that goal that the UN in Bahrain is gearing its joint efforts.

## Annex 1: Government of Bahrain Response Actions

Date	Action	Details	Stringency Index*	COVID-19 cases
Jan	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Testing policy</li> <li>Bahrain International Airport to screen all passengers who enter the Kingdom</li> </ul>	10	0
	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel restrictions</li> <li>Ban on all travelers who have visited China within the previous 14 days</li> </ul>	10	0
Feb	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel restrictions</li> <li>Travel restrictions to all foreign visitors who have visited Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea within the previous 14 days</li> </ul>	10	0
	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel restrictions</li> <li>Blocking all incoming flights from Dubai and Sharjah for 48 hours</li> </ul>	10	1
	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Closing</li> <li>Closure of public and private schools, universities and nurseries for 14 days</li> </ul>	24	33
Mar	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other responses</li> <li>Repatriation of 165 Bahrainis from Iran in the context of the 1st International COVID-19 Repatriation Program (ICRP)</li> </ul>	31	195
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancel public events</li> <li>Formula 1 Grand Prix announced to be cancelled</li> </ul>	31	195
	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel restrictions</li> <li>Bahrain's Gulf Air suspends dozens of routes due to coronavirus (excl. London, Paris)</li> </ul>	31	214
	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal measures</li> <li>"Shelter-in-place" and home confinement orders</li> <li>Other responses</li> <li>Workplace closing</li> <li>Relief package of BHD 4.3 billion announced to mitigate impact of COVID-19 on individuals and local businesses</li> <li>Mandatory self-quarantine for all travelers coming into the country for 14 days</li> <li>Suspension of visas on-arrival across all entry points, until further notice</li> <li>Closure of cinemas, restaurants, sports centers, pools and recreational centers (1 month)</li> </ul>	69	256

Mar	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace closing</li> <li>• Restriction on gathering size</li> <li>• Restriction on gathering size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure of all non-essential businesses temporarily (except supermarkets, pharmacies and banks), delivery services available</li> <li>• Banning the gathering of 5 people or more</li> <li>• Banning gatherings in public parks and beaches</li> </ul>	72	334
	24	• Other responses	• Police deployed to enforce precautionary measures against coronavirus spread	72	392
	26	• Workplace closing	• All commercial and industrial shops to be closed	75	458
	30	• Testing policy	• Random medical screening to be conducted across Bahrain	85	515
	2	• Workplace closing	• Work-from-home policy to cover 70% of employees	85	643
Apr	4	• Travel restrictions	• Bahrain International Airport to allow passengers transit	88	688
	9	• Workplace closing	• Seef Mall shops to be reopened	85	887
	11	• Income Support	• Tamkeen announces support program for SMEs affected by Covid19	85	1,000
	17	• Travel restrictions	• Trucks to be allowed through the Saudi-Bahrain Causeway	85	1,700
	20	• Fiscal measures	• Government Cabinet decide to reduce the operational expenses budget for ministries and government by 30%	85	1,900
		• Cancel public events	• Al Fateh Mosque to reopen during Ramadan for evening prayers		
	23	• Workplace closing	• All non-essential commercial shops to be closed	85	2,200
	24	• Other responses	• Government of Bahrain launches virtual mall	85	2,370
	25	• Testing policy	• Public buses converted into mobile screening units	85	2,600



Date	Action	Details	Stringency Index*	COVID-19 cases	
May	6	• Other responses	75	3,934	
		• Public information campaign			• The Ministry of Health delivers latest COVID-19 developments over WhatsApp
	7	• Other responses	75	4,199	
	9	• Public information campaign	• Drones equipped with loudspeakers are being deployed across the capital to enforce social distancing measures.	75	4,774
		12	• Other responses	• HM King ratifies and issues public security volunteer law	75
	13	• Testing policy	• Bahrain allows private hospitals to do COVID-19 tests	75	5,816
		• Contact tracing	• MoH expands capacity of COVID-19 isolation		
	19	• Restrictions on internal movement	• High Court of Appeal holds remote trial	75	7,532
20	• Other responses	• Robots deployed to help frontline workers in virus fight	75	7,888	
June	27	• Other responses	75	9,692	
		• Testing policy			
		• Contact tracing			• Bahrain launches the Corona Registration Service
		• Public information campaign			
	5	• "Shelter-in-place" and home confinement orders	• Asymptomatic active COVID-19 cases will now have the option to self-isolate at home	75	13835
	10	• Travel restrictions	• Digital campaign to promote Bahrain tourism	75	16,200
	17	• Fiscal measures	• Bahrain Plans \$470mln in emergency spending	75	19,553