

## **“The Role of UN Agencies and International Law in containing Pandemics”**

*Poornima Singh Pawar  
GAIL (India) Ltd.*

### **Abstract**

A Pandemic disease is an epidemic that has spread over a large area. that is, it is “prevalent throughout an entire country, continent or the whole world.” If you can recall the H1N1 outbreak in the early 2000s or taking precaution for COVID-19 right now, you must have come across the term. COVID-19 is said to be the biggest health and humanitarian catastrophe in decades that has not just affected the lives of humankind but also throttled the over-all world economy.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus called a coronavirus. The outbreak of Coronavirus illness (COVID-19), brought about by serious intense respiratory disorder (SARS) coronavirus 2 also known as SARS-COV-2, has so far killed almost 231,576 and tainted almost 3,275,475 worldwide. It is a homologous infection, SARS-COV, which caused SARS in a great many individuals in 2003, SARS-COV-2 may likewise be transmitted from the bats and causes comparable side effects through a comparable instrument. In any case, COVID-19 has lower seriousness and mortality than SARS however is considerably more transmissible and influences more aged people than youth and a greater number of individuals.

Leaders from all around the world have started forming calibrated policies to defeat the pandemic. In India, even though we have a population that is four times greater than countries like the US, the government’s stringent policies have resulted in a small number of infected persons as compared to other countries in the west.

One of the policies implemented has been the nation-wide lockdown. Started from March, 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 till April 14, the imposition of lockdown had unprecedented effects on the population of India which turned out to be quite clear after a few days of its announcement, when an exodus of migrants labours left their shelters, carrying bags on their heads forced to stranded on the roads.

Pandemic also engendered legislations that have been relegated to the archives, perceived to be anachronistic in the modern democratic set-up. State authorities implemented the various sections of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, Disaster Management Act 2005, to combat the novel virus.

Role of media is paramount amid this global catastrophe and there must be proper efforts in disseminating unbiased information among the people. failing to do so, may result in violence, tension and also circulation of fake news.

Because of the quickly expanding number of distributions on the rising infection, this article endeavors to give an opportune and extensive survey of the quickly creating research about the problems generated during a pandemic, harming the society badly and the roles of UN Agencies to overcome from these pandemic.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Covid 19, UN Agency, International law, Peace & Security

### **The Role of UN Agencies and International Law in containing Pandemics**

Pandemics mean happening over a wide geographic territory and influencing an especially high extent of the populace or a flare-up of an infection that happens over a wide geographic region and influences an outstandingly high extent of the populace<sup>1</sup>. There are number of example which shows the occurrence of pandemics worldwide i.e. pandemics since the start of the twentieth century: the H1N1 pandemic of 2009, the Spanish influenza of 1918/19 (which didn't begin in Spain), just as influenza pandemics in 1957 & 1968, and now the pandemic called as COVID-19/20. Among the most popular pandemics is the Black Death, a plague which spread across Asia and Europe in the fourteenth century<sup>2</sup>.

When a pandemic grows eventually and started harming thousands of people, it is the duty of UN Agencies to stop that or help each county to overcome from that pandemic. UN Agencies follow and governed by International law. When a pandemic grows large and spread worldwide, only International law can stop that effect from moving forward. Domestic laws are also plays an important role but international law becomes important for getting help from different countries.

### **UN Agencies plays a very important role during any pandemic:**

- 1. For helping countries to be prepared and respond when required:** For helping countries to be prepared and respond when required: UN Agency should help other countries to prepare the strategic plan against any pandemic along with respond plan. The list of action to be taken by the country and the resources which will be needed to carry them out should be mention in the plan and should contain all updated information and understanding, symptoms, characteristics of virus.
- 2. Giving exact data, busting risky legends:** The web is inundated with data about the pandemic, some of it valuable, some of it bogus or deceiving. Amidst this "infodemic", It is the duty of UN Agencies to provide explicit, detailed data and correct, favorable guidance that can help to save lives including specialized guidance for general society, wellbeing laborers and nations, with proof put together direction with respect to each component of the reaction, and detonating risky legends. The UN Agencies profits by the mastery of a worldwide system of medical experts and researchers, including disease transmission experts, clinicians and virologists, to guarantee that the reaction is as

---

<sup>1</sup> Webster-Merriam, *definition of pandemic*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pandemic>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

complete, definitive and agent as could be expected under the circumstances. To guarantee data is right and accommodating, Health agency should set up a group to give everybody access to auspicious, precise and straightforward exhortation, from confided in sources. Also, day by day circumstance reports and press briefings, just as briefings with governments, are keeping the world educated about the most recent information, data and proof.

**3. Guaranteeing crucial supplies reach forefront wellbeing laborers:** Health professionals are required to be protected and they need the equipments to save lives including their own. So, personal protective equipments are required to be delivered to every country including checking test kits etc. All the agencies should work together for increasing the fund for more production and distribution of essential elements and their supplies. They must have some supply chain plans for more supply in the area where it is more needed.

**4. Preparing and assembling wellbeing laborers:** They can be prepared if they train the health worker properly, during pandemic going to the center and getting training is not possible then they can use online platforms for the same. They should be thankful to the online tools and platforms that people can get knowledge from everywhere and it can be transferred from everywhere. A pandemic cannot be a obstacle between learning and society. The countries should be supported by experts and deployed from the other countries. During flare-ups, the system guarantees that the correct specialized mastery and abilities are on the ground where and when they are required most. Crisis Medical Teams are additionally a significant piece of the worldwide wellbeing workforce. These groups are exceptionally prepared, and independent, and are sent to places recognized as debacle or crisis zones.

**5. To prepare/search an inoculation:** At the earliest, countries should start research over vaccine of the disease. Every country should start testing in their laboratories for the vaccine. The UN Agencies can also call the researcher from different countries to a single place as it is well said “team work is more effective and quick”.

**6. Aiding the least fortunate and generally helpless:** While working for the wellbeing of the world, the wellbeing of the poor and underprivileged people cannot be ignored. They should be committed to serve all with equality and neutrality.

The countries having high ratio of poor people is more and they need to take care of them. i.e. they can provide fund to the NGO’s who are working for society, allow the social workers to go out and provide the food and other essential elements, give instructions to the police etc. so the underprivileged people can also be happy and safe during any pandemic<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> UN News, *5 reasons the world needs WHO, to fight the COVID-19 pandemic*, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061412>

**Role of “World Health Organization” during pandemic:**

A worldwide way to deal with tending to medical problems and crises is given by the United Nation's World Health Organization (WHO), which was built up in 1946. The World health organization also consist International Health Regulations (IHR). Its participation is available to all Members of the United Nations and Associate Members. The WHO's goal is the achievement by all people groups of the most significant level of wellbeing. Following an extreme intense respiratory disorder (SARS) pandemic in 2003, the WHO and its Member States refreshed the WHO components for forestalling and controlling pandemics. In 2005, the WHO initiated a Pandemic Preparedness Program that requires the Member States to make national readiness plans. Additionally in 2005, the World Health Assembly concurred on new IHR that make a global pandemic hazard the board framework by requiring the Member States to provide details regarding an extended rundown of ailments and open crises, to control the passage and exit of voyagers and merchandise, and to take other careful steps as per WHO proposals. The framework was scrutinized in the A (H1N1) infection flu that developed in Mexico in April 2009 and immediately arrived at worldwide measurements. Since that time, the WHO has established the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework to improve readiness for and reaction to pandemic flu and has supplanted the 2009 direction with the 2013 Pandemic Influenza Risk Management WHO Interim Guidance.<sup>4</sup>

**One of the most important roles is to secure the International peace and security:**

This can only be done with the help of international law. Hence, International law is equally important in maintaining the peace and security and has it been proved in history?

“Pandemics are generally sickness flare-ups that become broad because of the spread of human-to-human infection”.

1. Beyond the crippling, at times deadly, ramifications for those straightforwardly influenced, pandemics have a scope of negative social, monetary and political outcomes. These will in general be more noteworthy where the pandemic is a novel pathogen, has a high mortality as well as hospitalization rate and is handily spread. As per Lee Jong-wook, previous Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), pandemics don't regard global borders.<sup>5</sup>
2. Therefore, they can possibly debilitate numerous social orders, political frameworks and economies at the same time.

The relationship of pandemics with national security risk developed to conspicuousness in the 1990s. In 1995, the World Health Assembly (WHA) consented to overhaul the

---

<sup>4</sup> Library, *World Health Organization: Legal Responses to Health Emergencies*, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/health-emergencies/who.php>

<sup>5</sup> Sara E. Davis, *National peace and security*, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/national-security-and-pandemics>

International Health Regulations (IHR), the main global legitimate system administering how WHO and its part States ought to react to irresistible ailment flare-ups, in light of the fact that correction was expected to take "successful record of the danger presented by the universal spread of new and reappearing diseases". In 2005, the IHR modifications were received as WHA Resolution. Article 2 declared that the degree and reason for the instrument was "to forestall, ensure against, control and give a general wellbeing reaction to the worldwide spread of disease in manners that are equivalent with and limited to general wellbeing risks". Since its entrance into power in 2007, signatory States have been working, exclusively and on the whole, to meet their center limit necessities under the new structure.

**There are three key ideas about the connection among pandemics and security:**

**In the first place**, partner wellbeing arrangement duties with security can raise the degree of need given to an issue and convey results. While 110 part States won't meet their IHR center limits by 2014, most of these States are moving in the direction of a usage way with the WHO Director-General. Scarcely any different territories of worldwide administration can flaunt comparative levels responsibility and consistence; less still where center national limits and structures are concerned.

**Second**, wellbeing security has not misshaped approach by distracting from the wellbeing emergencies that influence a large portion of the total populace. Truth be told, increased worldwide and national enthusiasm for pandemic counteraction and reaction has assisted with raising the objective of all inclusive medicinal services inclusion. It is currently generally perceived that successful anticipation and reaction to a pandemic requires national wellbeing frameworks that are open and impartial. All inclusive human services inclusion isn't the main answer in reinforcing wellbeing frameworks however numerous states, for example, China, see it as a center piece of their successful reaction to illness episode occasions. **Third**, IHR consistence should be comprehended through a territorial focal point and bolstered by worldwide organizations. Territorial systems permit an increasingly custom fitted methodology that perceives the settings where states work and build up structures steady with local standards. This all assists with building the essential trust and certainty. In any case, areas and individual states can't do this all alone and WHO has a significant task to carry out in helping its territorial workplaces and helping out its part States. The more extensive United Nations framework, particularly bodies, for example, the Peacebuilding Commission and organizations, for example, the United Nations Development Program and United Nations Children's Fund, have a supporting task to carry out in helping states manufacture the specialized limits expected to convey the IHRs.

**How UN Agency working and playing their role during Pandemic, COVID 19:<sup>6</sup>****Peacekeeping**

Peacekeeping missions are setting up a progression of moderation measures to advance the wellbeing, security and soundness of all UN staff while keeping up coherence of activities.

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

A worldwide pandemic is a period of intense decisions. The strategy choices taken presently will shape the destiny of millions and characterize the fate of countries. How to spare individuals' lives without obliterating their occupations? Where to distribute rare assets? How to secure the individuals who don't have the way to ensure themselves? UNDESA specialists are working nonstop to help leaders explore these extreme decisions and keep the world from sliding into a perilous misery.

**The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

UNESCO is offering quick help to nations as they work to limit the instructive disturbance and encourage the coherence of learning, particularly for the most defenseless.

**The United Nations Environment Program**

The transmission of infections like COVID-19 among creatures and people (zoonoses) compromises financial turn of events, creature and human prosperity, and biological system uprightness. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) underpins worldwide endeavors to secure biodiversity, to stop illicit exchange untamed life, to shield the treatment of synthetic substances and squander and to advance financial recuperation designs that consider nature and the atmosphere crisis.

**International Trade Centre**

The International Trade Center is intently following how the pandemic is influencing smaller scale, little and medium-sized ventures (MSMEs), with a specific spotlight on those independent companies in creating nations. This devoted segment of the site gives bits of knowledge and direction to private ventures looking for approaches to adapt to the operational pressure created by COVID-19 and is additionally a valuable asset for business bolster associations and policymakers helping MSMEs in these endeavors.

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization**

As we react to the crisis and begin to recuperate from the financial stun, we should cooperate to guarantee that the recuperation will concentrate on building comprehensive and economical economies that are stronger in confronting pandemics, environmental change and numerous other worldwide difficulties. Here, UNIDO has a lot to offer as far as revamping

---

<sup>6</sup> UNITED NATIONS, *COVID 19 Response*, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/information-un-system>

flexibly chains, making fair employments for ladies and youth, moving innovation, including progressed advanced creation innovation, modern redesigning, asset effectiveness and cleaner creation, to give some examples.

### **United Nations Development Programme**

UNDP is working with its accomplices to battle the spread of the illness and to help the most influenced nations where wellbeing frameworks are most fragile and individuals are at their generally powerless. Each nation needs to act promptly to get ready, react, and recuperate. Joined Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has propelled a US\$2 billion worldwide compassionate reaction plan in the most helpless. Creating nations could lose at any rate US\$220 billion in salary, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has called for US\$2.5 trillion to help them.

Drawing on our involvement in different episodes, for example, Ebola, HIV, SARS, TB and jungle fever, just as our long history of working with the private and open division, UNDP will push nations to desperately and adequately react to COVID-19 as a major aspect of its crucial kill neediness, diminish imbalances and fabricate versatility to emergencies and stuns.<sup>7</sup>

An also UNDP-drove COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility has just been propelled, financed by existing assets and promoted with an underlying \$20 million. *This office is dispensing through a most optimized plan of attack component empowering UNDP groups to offer prompt help to nations for their national reaction.* UNDP envisions a base \$500 million need to help 100 nations. UNDP is as of now giving COVID-19 wellbeing frameworks backing to nations including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Panama, Serbia, Ukraine, and Vietnam. In Eritrea and Djibouti, for instance, UNDP is making sure about existence supporting clinical hardware, store clinical supplies, and set up isolate destinations. In Serbia, with the European Union, UNDP is helping accomplices adjust debacle versatility tasks to convey genuinely necessary clinical supplies. In Niger, UNDP is working with the Economic Commission of Africa on the financial effect and with the World Bank on private division backing to recuperation. In Madagascar, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank are working with the Government to build up a social assurance program to help the gatherings most in danger. All inclusive, UNDP is helping the private division react, including through its Connecting Business Initiative guide for private segment commitment, created with FAO, the Global Compact, IOM, OCHA, the UN Foundation, UN Women, WFP and WHO.

### **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

In Asia and the Pacific, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have resounded among a populace of in excess of 4 billion and in economies crucial to worldwide gracefully chains.

---

<sup>7</sup> UNDP, *COVID-19 pandemic, Humanity needs leadership and solidarity to defeat the coronavirus*, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>

ESCAP is working rapidly and all things considered to shape reactions for a reasonable future. To help part States' reaction, ESCAP has created arrangement notes with direction on comprehensive assurance and monetary versatility, division explicit approach briefs, and master web journals. Leader productions, including the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2020 additionally consolidate the effect of the pandemic in their investigations.

### **World Food Programme**

WFP set up an air center point in Addis Ababa to disperse fundamental clinical supplies across Africa for the benefit of the bigger philanthropic network. A group of 25 WFP flight and co-ordinations staff are at the air terminal nonstop to deal with the 24-hour activity. The principal "UN solidarity flight" withdrew on April 14, conveying covers, covers; face shields, gloves, goggles, outfits, and thermometers.

WFP Executive Director David Beasley cautioned that COVID-19 could twofold the quantity of individuals confronting nourishment emergencies, particularly where strife has just caused significant appetite, and present "different starvations of scriptural extents inside a short barely any months." You can see his comments to the UN Security Council, introduced on April 21, [here](#).

WFP and others in the Global Network Against Food Crises discharged the 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, which recognized the most significant level of intense nourishment instability and lack of healthy sustenance since the report's first version in 2017 and uncovering new dangers due to COVID-19.

### **The United Nations Volunteers**

UNV program is the one of a kind basic assistance of the United Nations that prepares more than 8,000 UN Volunteers a year and advances volunteerism around the world. UNV is effectively joining the UN COVID-19 reaction by enlisting UN Volunteers with master capacities with regards to over UN substances. UNV additionally has 600,000 enrolled online volunteers, prepared to take on task-based assignments remotely to battle COVID-19

### **The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine**

The UN organization for Palestine displaced people has built up a COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and propelled a COVID-19 US\$ 14 Million Flash Appeal for Palestine Refugees. The first COVID-19 case in an evacuee camp in Lebanon was recognized for the current week—a Palestine outcast from Syria. UNRWA is cooperating with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) on the finishing of a seclusion community for Palestine outcasts, as division in thickly populated regions is close to incomprehensible. To help uphold social removing and remain at home rules, UNRWA genuinely shipped nourishment crates to 73,000 homes, around 4,000 individual homes for each day. On April 21 alone, UNRWA oversaw 464 calls through its recently settled telemedicine hotline.



Around the same time, UNRWA additionally conveyed fundamental medication to patients matured 70 or more seasoned and additionally with diabetes to in excess of 644 people. All schools stay shut. During this conclusion, in excess of 166,200 guardians have visited UNRWA's Interactive Learning Program and 82,000 have gotten to UNRWA's self-learning materials.

### **The International Organization for Migration**

In Tunisia, IOM's promotion effectively brought about the incorporation of transients in the national COVID-19 reaction, including the foundation of a multilingual hotline for vagrants to get to data, free testing for vagrants, and the arrangement of other important administrations, for example, psychosocial support. IOM Uganda has upheld the foundation and preparing of 18 network based WASH the executives boards of trustees to deal with the activity and support of water focuses and to guarantee social separating, hand washing, and other COVID-19 reaction measures at key water focuses. IOM Guinea has set up a malady reconnaissance framework at five fringe crossing focuses with Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Mali. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, five purposes of control (POCs) are bolstered by IOM in Kinshasa. IOM has furnished cutting edge laborers with individual security hardware (PPE), wellbeing screening materials and tablets to help contact following, and has given direct specialized management at the POC destinations in Gombe – Kinshasa. Between April 6-15, 178,848 explorers were screened at the five PoCs.

### **The United Nations Population Fund**

UNFPA gave 18,000 clinical veils to New York City to assist it with battling COVID-19 and bolster cutting edge wellbeing laborers. The primary instances of COVID-19 were affirmed in South Sudan in April. South Sudan has one of the most exceedingly terrible maternal death rates on the planet. At the point when the nation was first framed in 2008, it had 8 birthing specialists. Presently there are more than 800, 444 of which have been prepared by UNFPA. At the present time, UNFPA is working with the South Sudan Ministry of Health to set up measures to guarantee that maternal wellbeing administrations are protected to forestall passing and sicknesses, particularly among pregnant and breastfeeding ladies and their infants. Measures are additionally being set up to ensure cutting edge wellbeing laborers, including maternity specialists. The arrangement incorporates enlisting extra birthing specialists to help the foreseen flood popular for medicinal services.

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

This week, UNHCR featured the extra security hazards the pandemic stances for outcasts and other uprooted individuals, a considerable lot of whom were living in helpless circumstances preceding the general wellbeing crisis. UNHCR is attempting to guarantee that basic administrations for over comers of sex based viciousness are assigned as basic and are available to those out of luck. These incorporate wellbeing and security administrations, psycho-social help administrations and safe sanctuaries. Across activities, UNHCR is

additionally appropriating crisis money help to help survivors and ladies in danger. UNHCR is cooperating with UNICEF to help the prosperity of coercively uprooted kids comprehensively and address the particular insurance challenges introduced by the pandemic, including through investigating components for separation learning and expanded money help.

### **The United Nations Children's Fund**

This week UNICEF and Microsoft propelled an extension of their "Learning Passport" worldwide learning stage. At first intended to give training to dislodged and outcast youngsters through a computerized remote learning stage, the Learning Passport has experienced fast development to encourage nation level educational plan for kids and youth whose schools have been compelled to close due to COVID-19. The stage will likewise give distinct advantages to instructors and teachers. UNICEF helped with the drafting of the UN Secretary-General's new strategy brief on "The Impact of COVID-19 on Children," which underscored that the financial effect of the pandemic, combined with measures to stop the transmission of the infection, could have disastrous ramifications for the world's kids. The strategy brief offers a progression of quick and supported activities for governments and arrangement producers identifying with social assurance, congruity of kid focused administrations, and backing for parental figures.

### **International Labour Organization**

The ILO-IFC's Better Work program in Bangladesh cooperated with other UN offices and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Export Association to make a team with intrigued purchasers to help the creation of level-1 PPE hardware in the nation, both as a reaction to the prompt COVID-19 emergency and as a future interest in more significant level PPE creation limit in the long haul. Notwithstanding social occasion and sharing data on nations' reactions, including through the ILO's Country Policy Responses Database, the ILO has built up a progression of briefs on the effect, reactions, and suggestions for explicit financial segments. Smaller scale, little, and medium-sized undertakings are especially powerless since they will in general have less resources and more constrained money saves than bigger endeavors, just as lower levels of efficiency. On April 16, the ILO distributed suggestions to help ventures during the pandemic and recuperation just as a Checklist for the Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 in the work environment.

### **Conclusion**

UN Agencies have always been an important part of the world for their well being, they have played a key role in helping the world during the pandemic not just today but in the past as well. During the pandemic in the past, WHO<sup>8</sup> ceaselessly observed the advancement of the pandemic and created direction for the Member States to set up suitable measures that include

---

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization

improving observation and dynamic checking, appraisal of the pandemic attributes and proposals on fitting measures including clinical and non- clinical medications, along with WHO, UNHA<sup>9</sup> has also performed an essential task in handling COVID 19 pandemic, since primary cases were discovered in China in Wuhan in the month of December.

### **References:**

- Webster-Merriam, definition of pandemic, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pandemic>
- UN News, 5 reasons the world needs WHO, to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061412>
- Library, World Health Organization: Legal Responses to Health Emergencies, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/health-emergencies/who.php>
- Sara E. Davis, National peace and security, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/national-security-and-pandemics>
- UNITED NATIONS, *COVID 19 Response*, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/information-un-system>
- UNDP, COVID-19 pandemic, Humanity needs leadership and solidarity to defeat the coronavirus, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>

---

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Health Agency