



UNDRR  
COVID-19 BRIEF

# Arab States and COVID-19: Lessons Learned in Preparing for & Responding to COVID-19

17 May 2020

#PreventionSavesLives



COVID-19  
RESPONSE



**UNDRR**

UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

***” One of the most important sectors that will be affected by COVID19 is the food security sector due to the low strategic stocks and the lack of employment.”***

Dr. Djamel Djaballah, Director of Water, Housing and Disaster Risk Reduction,  
League of Arab States

## DRR CHALLENGE

COVID-19 pandemic has had a worldwide effect and the Arab states region has not been immune to it. The widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the systemic nature of risk. Countries in the region have undertaken timely actions to contain the virus and respond to its threats on the public health system and the broader economy. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a biological hazard affecting merely the health sector. While the impact of the pandemic varies from one country to another, it will most likely lead to a generalized increased poverty and exacerbated inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent. Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic is adding pressure to the already overburdened systems in fragile contexts, as they prepare to face other natural hazards such as, floods, wildfires, droughts etc...

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 addresses biological hazards, such as epidemics and pandemics, in addition to natural hazards as a key area of focus for disaster risk management. Four of the seven Sendai Framework global targets have direct links to health, focusing on reducing mortality, population wellbeing, early warning and promoting the safety of health facilities and hospitals.

## WEBINAR OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the webinar is to discuss the lessons learned in responding to the COVID19 crisis by the national Sendai Framework focal point institutions; and facilitate a peer-to-peer exchange among national focal points on effective preparedness, recovery and long-term mitigation measures in combating the far-reaching implications of the pandemic. The webinar answers the following questions:

1. What role have national DRR institutions been playing in COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery efforts?

2. What measures and approaches have been taken to address the broader socio-economic impact of the pandemic in your country and what has been the role of the DRR FPs in this regard.

3. As a way forward, what do you see the role of the international development community including the League of Arab States and the United Nations in strengthening the capacity of Arab countries in reducing biological hazards and epidemics in the future.

## PANELISTS:

**Mr. Sujit Kumar Mohanty**  
Chief of the United Nations  
Office for Disaster Risk  
Reduction - Regional Office for  
Arab States



**HE Dr. Jamal Jab Allah**  
Director of Water, Housing  
and Disaster Risk Reduction  
at the League of Arab States



**Dr. Dalia Samhuri, Manager**  
Emergency Preparedness and  
International Health  
Regulations from World Health  
Organization (WHO)



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to test/learn from existing DRR strategies and plans to inform future preparedness and response activities;
- Highlight the importance of implementing DRR strategies and actions plans;
- Activate multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder DRR coordination mechanisms (including DRR national Platforms) to support preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery;
- Successful implementation of disaster risk management measures requires coherence and coordination between national and local governments;
- Review the Arab Strategy for DRR 2030 to take into consideration biological hazards;

- Collect and input disaggregated data on disaster loss databases to support evidence based decision-making;
- Ensure the continuity of critical functions and basic services during disaster (e.g. water and sanitation; energy; food; telecommunications; law & order; education; and transportation);
- Move towards self-sufficiency especially when it comes to food security and decrease dependency on imports.
- Establish a funding mechanism to support implementation of the Sendai Framework in developing countries

### Acknowledgements

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**References for further Reading:**

[UNDRR website press release](#)