

# **Audit of measures by ECE to adapt its programme of work and operational workplans to implement the United Nations strategy in supporting the Member States' response to the COVID-19**

## **The vision of the Secretary-General**

The vision of the Secretary-General for UN response to the Covid-19 pandemic is described in the SG report Shared Responsibly, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 (March 2020). The General Assembly resolution (A/RES/74/270 dated 3 April 2020) strongly supports the central role of the United Nations system in the global response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The report outlines the need for action for the immediate health response required to suppress transmission of the virus to end the pandemic and to tackle the many social and economic dimensions of this crisis.

## **Summary of major developments**

1. Response through the United Nations Development System: The Secretary-General launched the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF) with an initial ask of \$2 billion, \$1 billion of which is expected to be disbursed in the first nine months of the fund's operations. Programming will be rolled out in three windows: (i) supporting implementation of national health plans for combatting COVID-19; (ii) funding social and economic protection mechanisms; and (iii) helping countries recover better.
2. Business Continuity Plan activation to support UN response through telework initially using existing tools and seeking improved support systems for telework/telecommuting. Key was to ensure the UN continues its vital work around the world.
3. The UN Headquarter and Offices away from Headquarters have undertaken measures for the health and safety of the staff in line WHO guidance and host-country directives.
4. Strengthened UN commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Operating environment**

The UNSDG-developed report (A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (May 2020)) sets out the modality for the implementation of the United Nations response to the COVID-19. Taking into consideration the political, economic, social and technological environment relating to the overarching risks outlined by the Secretary-General, four principles were adopted by the UNDS in the context of switching to "emergency mode" to better support the Member States to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic: (1) minimizing transaction costs; (2) enhanced flexibility by drawing on programming and operational modalities usually reserved for high risk, conflict and humanitarian responses; (3) risks must be taken and managed; and (4) coherence and discipline in working with and through collective initiatives and frameworks. In addition, a number of special measures are invoked to facilitate the implementation of the response.

## **Proposed scope of the audit/advisory of ECE**

The audit or advisory on measures by ECE to repurpose its programme of work in response to the COVID-19 will need to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a strategy for supporting Member States response to Covid-19 (health, and socio-economic impact)?

2. Is there a framework or strategic plan to mainstream COVID-19 response or other related frameworks such as the sustainable development goals into ECE programme of work to effectively support Member States?
3. Is there an effective governance and oversight structure to support ECE response to COVID-19?
4. Are there adequate resources (personnel and financial) to support ECE strategy to support Member States response to COVID 19?
5. Is there an appropriate coordination mechanism with United Nations entities (UNCT, Regional Commissions and UNDCO), regional entities (European Union for example), and other partners (private and civil society) to ensure synergy and minimize duplication to efficiently support Member States?