



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

Department for Planning  
and Operations

[lutheranworld.org](http://lutheranworld.org)

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## STATEMENT: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND IN RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### LWF calls on governments, humanitarian actors and churches to ensure quick and inclusive response

30 March 2020

GENEVA, Switzerland

As the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread around the world, the LWF calls for a rapid, adequate, and inclusive response that protects the human rights of all, and ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

While the pandemic affects the whole human race, those already vulnerable – refugees, the homeless, people with disabilities, the poor, women, girls, and children exposed to discrimination and violence – are disproportionately affected. The limited and, in many cases, complete lack of water, sanitation, and proper shelter for people in refugee camps and informal settlements dangerously expose them. Any response must not leave them behind.

It is vital that governments, communities, and people around the world stand united in response to COVID-19. We must work collectively and individually to halt the spread of the disease. As we maintain physical distance between people, which is vital to slowing down the spread of the virus, we need to come up with ways of staying connected as communities.

The LWF and its member churches stand ready to support the response to COVID-19 at local and at national levels. Already, the LWF, through its humanitarian arm World Service is engaged in the global, regional, and national response.

LWF calls on governments and the international community to

- Ensure that humanitarian actors can safely access countries and regions where an emergency response to COVID-19 is required,
- allocate new and additional funds to halt the spread and mitigate the socio-economic effects of the pandemic while ensuring that existing humanitarian resources are not diverted,
- ensure that all COVID-19 response measures pay specific attention to those for whom physical distancing and other protective measures are not accessible,
- ensure that the human rights of all people in the short term and long term are protected in the course of responding to Covid-19,
- Lift existing political and economic sanctions on countries such as Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Syria, Palestine, and others whose national circumstances make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

LWF calls on humanitarian actors and civil society to

- Ensure that aid is given without discrimination and that the most vulnerable populations in each context are included,
- safeguard the rights and livelihoods of women, who are disproportionately affected, as they constitute the majority in informal trade, health care, and care work and face a higher risk of income loss and limited access to reproductive health services,
- protect girls, boys, and women of all ages from sexual exploitation and abuse

LWF calls on its member churches to

- Follow the advice and instructions from qualified public health professionals particularly on physical distancing and proper hygiene,
- Continue standing together in solidarity and prayer, stay connected, reach out to one other and contribute to communion and community building in safe ways,
- counter misinformation and fear in public with the correct information,
- provide theological guidance that affirms and protects the integrity of human life and encourages critical discernment, community resilience, social solidarity, and realistic hope.

*The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 148 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 75 million Christians in 99 countries. The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, communication and the various aspects of mission and development.*

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