



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

31 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to thank all United Nations staff members for your dedication and hard work in the face of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Your health and well-being remain foremost in my mind as we strive to save lives and support people in need.

I would like to update you on measures that we are taking to ensure your safety. On 13 March 2020, in order to mitigate the spread of the virus, we announced that all colleagues would begin working remotely unless their physical presence was needed to carry out essential work in New York and around the world. We also tested our business continuity plans and undertook to continually assess the rapidly developing situation.

This past Sunday, the federal authorities of the United States of America announced that the guidance on social distancing is to be extended through 30 April 2020. As a result, and in consultation with senior management, I have decided that the current telecommuting arrangements at United Nations Headquarters shall be extended through 30 April 2020.

The Senior Emergency Policy Team and Crisis Operations Group will continue to evaluate our operational arrangements. Senior managers and I will be in regular contact with you as developments unfold.

Updates will continue to be shared at [www.un.org/coronavirus](http://www.un.org/coronavirus). A COVID-19 helpline is in place to answer your questions (1 212 963 9999), and the Departments of Operational Support and of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance stand ready to assist as needed.

As this crisis deepens, we can be proud that the United Nations remains open for business, while doing our utmost to protect our colleagues.

We have effectively used the tools available to us to continue our operations, and I am grateful to colleagues for embracing this new way of work as we provide critical support to our offices and missions in the field, as well as to the intergovernmental processes.

All United Nations Staff Members

I again urge anyone with symptoms or health-related questions to contact the United Nations Medical Service. Be assured that all such approaches will be handled with confidentiality and privacy. I also encourage staff to reach out to each other, and to check in on those who may be feeling vulnerable or isolated.

Let me thank you again for rising to this challenge and moving forward with a common sense of purpose. We are stronger together – and we will get through this, together.

Yours sincerely,

*with my warmest personal regards*



António Guterres