UNOG Bi-weekly press briefing: Appeal to COVID-19 Response - IFRC

27-03-2020 | Edited NewsCOVID-19

Shotlist

1. Exterior, Palais des Nations
2. SOUNDBITE (English) - Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): “Unfortunately everything is focused on the COVID-19, so even the cardio-surgeons are working in the war for COVID-19. Think about the physiotherapist, the physiotherapist, in the hospital in Bergamo, now he is dedicated to treat the dead bodies, so we are reinventing ourselves”.
3. Medium shot, UN Palais
4. SOUNDBITE (English) - Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) : “We have a lot of people who are living very marginalized in the so-called black hole of the society with daily jobs, or other ways to live. In the most difficult neighborhood of the biggest cities I am afraid that in a few weeks we will have social problems, this is a social bomb that can explode in every moment. Because they don’t have any way to have an income, or to find an income. People that normally live with 20 – 25 Euros per day, with this little job on a daily basis, and maybe they have 2 children or a family, and they have no income in this moment and they are not in the system of social assistance”
5. Wide shot, flag in front of UN Palais
6. SOUNDBITE (English) - Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):“We opened a different telephone line to support the health worker, because the health workers are dealing with something unprecedented. They are experiencing something that they have never seen, and they will succumb. Think about again
what could happen in a vulnerable country, so we are supporting the health workers, we are supporting those who are isolated. We think and we are experiencing that the risk of suicide is increasing with isolating people. Those who are drug addicted now are using alcohol, and alcohol, and this is something that we have a lot of evidence of this. So, the psycho-social support is something badly needed to support our communities”.

7. Medium shot, flags
8. SOUNDBITE (English) - Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): “Yesterday I was in Codonia and a volunteer that was working there came close to me. She said, ‘You know what Francesco, I lost my mother this morning and the only way to cope with this was to go in the (IFRC) branch and do some services’. Because if not she would have to stay alone at home without the possibility to mourn her own mother. And I couldn’t hug her, she was crying in front of me, two meters far from me, she was crying desperately, and I could not hug. We are missing and we are going to miss all over the world what we are growing with, we are born with the hug of ours mothers and fathers, we grew up hugging when we mourn something, even when we pass through terrible experiences in the past like earthquakes, but even in conflict areas we can hug each other if we are afraid. The terrible thing of this is the lack of the human touch, the physical human touch. And this is why it is so important the psycho-social support”.

9. Close up, UN Palais
10. SOUNDBITE (English) - Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) : “My only advise to the politicians, and those who have the responsibility to run a country, that this is not the time for optimism. They have to prepare a recovery plan, a contingency plan. They have to prepare their hospitals dedicated to COVD-19, they have to look for ventilators, even if these are expenses, they don’t have to wait. The time to act is now. If some country is so lucky, that they are not experiencing the crisis as we are experiencing here or in France or in Spain, now it is time to prepare. There are no excuses now, no excuses. No president and no minister of health, no one who has the responsibility to run a country to be optimistic that it will not hit my country”.

11. Exterior shot, UN Palais
Nearly USD 825 million are needed for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to assist the world’s most vulnerable communities to face the new coronavirus, according to a revised emergency appeal for the pandemic launched in Geneva today.

The death toll in the global COVID-19 outbreak climbed towards 22,000 people.

The President of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, Francesco Rocca, spoke to reporter in Geneva via videoconference from Milan, Italy, having undertaken a field visit to the hardest-hit locations in the Lombardy region.

“Everything is focused on the COVID-19, so even the cardio-surgeons are working in the war for COVID-19,” he said, describing the situation in the hospitals. “Think about the physiotherapist, the physiotherapist, in the hospital in Bergamo, now he is dedicated to treat the dead bodies,” he added, saying that health workers had to “reinvent” their professional roles on a daily basis.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement consists of three parts: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Together they will provide direct medical services and healthcare to those impacted by COVID-19, supporting quarantined communities with education, care, shelter, and feeding. In addition they deliver psycho-social support to the self-isolated, caregivers and give durable and non-durable medical supplies and equipment to those in need, including Personal Protective Equipment (PEP), as well as essential blood and plasma.

Mr. Rocca warned of “a social bomb” which could explode at any moment as there are plenty of people whose daily subsistence wages are threatened by the crisis and who fall in the cracks of the social protection systems.

“We have a lot of people who are living very marginalized in the so-called ‘black hole’ of the society with daily jobs, or other ways to live. In the most difficult neighborhoods of the biggest cities I am afraid that in a few weeks we will have social problems, this is a social bomb that can explode in every moment”, Mr. Rocca said.

“Because they don’t have any way to have an income, or to find an income. People that normally live with 20, 25 Euros per day, with this little job on a daily basis, and maybe they have two children or a family, and they have no income in this moment and they are not in the system of social assistance”.

Psycho-social support will become more and more important for health care workers but also for the population as the coronavirus spread and more people will have to live in isolation, Mr. Rocca said, noting that his organization has already seen a rise in suicides, including among health workers.

“We opened a different telephone line to support the health worker, because the health workers are dealing with something unprecedented. They are experiencing something that they have never seen, and they will succumb. Think about again — what could happen in a vulnerable country? — so we are supporting the health workers, we are supporting those who are isolated. We think and we are experiencing that the risk of suicide is increasing with isolating people. Those who are drug addicted now are using alcohol, and alcohol, and this is something that we have a lot of evidence of, this. So, the psycho-social support is something badly needed to support our communities,” Mr. Rocca explained.

The IFRC President has visited a number of hard-hit areas, including Bergamo, Brescia, Lodi and the smaller town of Codogno that was the ‘ground-zero’ of the epidemic in Italy.
“Yesterday I was in Codogno and a volunteer that was working there came close to me,” Mr. Rocca recounted. “She said: ‘You know what Francesco, I lost my mother this morning and the only way to cope with this was to go in the (Red Cross) branch and do some services’. Because if not she would have to stay alone at home without the possibility to mourn her own mother. And I couldn’t hug her, she was crying in front of me, two meters far from me, she was crying desperately, and I could not hug her. We are missing and we are going to miss all over the world what we are growing with, we are borne with the hug of ours mothers and fathers, we grew up hugging when we mourn something. Even when we pass through terrible experiences in the past like earthquakes, but even in conflict areas we can hug each other if we are afraid.,” Mr. Rocca said.

“The terrible thing of this (new coronavirus epidemic) is the lack of the human touch, the physical human touch. And this is why it is so important, the psycho-social support,” he added.

Mr. Rocca appealed today to all governments in the world to take action now and not to indulge in false optimism.

“My only advice to the politicians, and those who have the responsibility to run a country, is that this is not the time for optimism. They have to prepare a recovery plan, a contingency plan. They have to prepare their hospitals dedicated to COVID-19, they have to look for ventilators, even if these are expenses, they don’t have to wait. The time to act is now,” he warned.

“If some country is so lucky, that they are not experiencing the crisis as we are experiencing here or in France or in Spain, now it is time to prepare. There are no excuses now, no excuses. No president and no minister of health, no one who has the responsibility to run a country could be optimistic that it will not hit my country”.