

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Monthly Bulletin

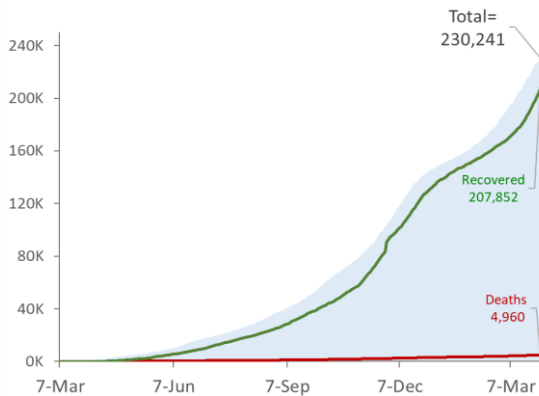
March 2021



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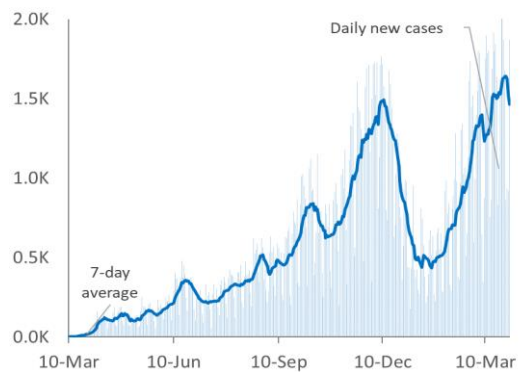
1 COVID-19 Epi and Health situation update (Data as at 31 March unless stated otherwise)

Total Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



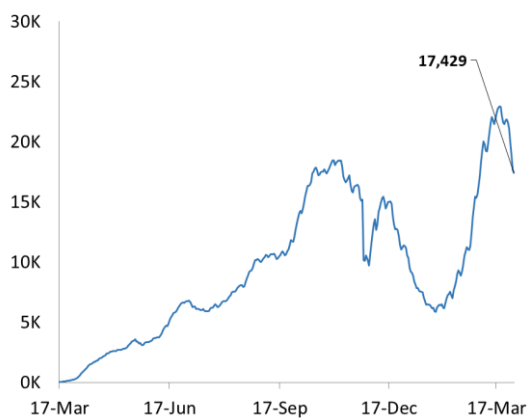
The total number of COVID-19 cases in the country has continued to accelerate and reached 230,241 at the end of March. The number increased further on the first day of April and now stands at 231,756.

New Infections



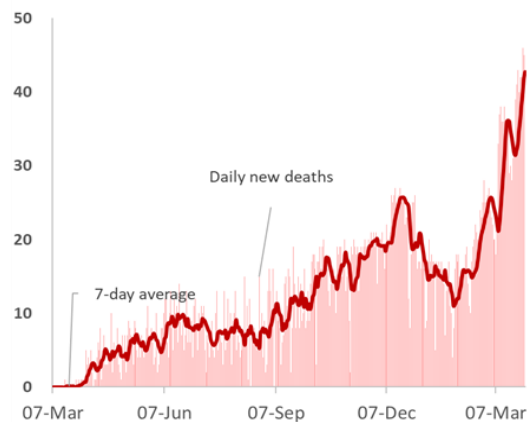
The number of new cases has grown substantially during March and reached a 7-day average of 1,465 at the end of March compared to 1,291 at the beginning of the month.

Active Cases



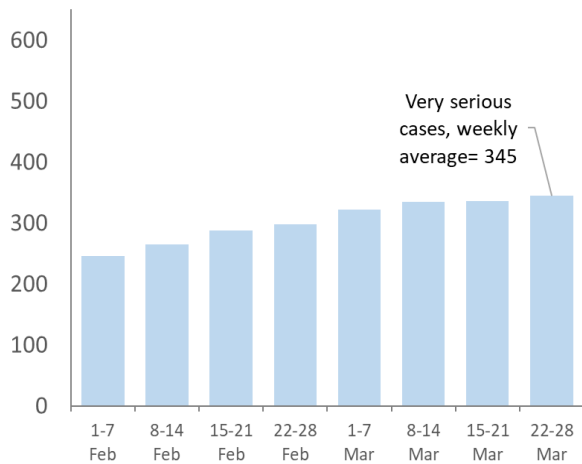
The number of active cases increased for the first few weeks of March and started to decrease towards the end of the Month. The number of active cases at the end of March stood at 17,429.

New Deaths



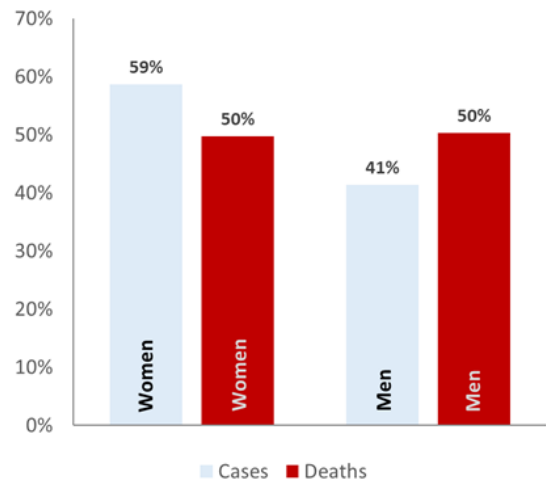
The 7-day average for the number of deaths increased substantially in March and currently stands at 42.71. The total number of deaths was 4,960 at the end of March and exceeded 5,000 on the first day of April.

Very Serious Cases



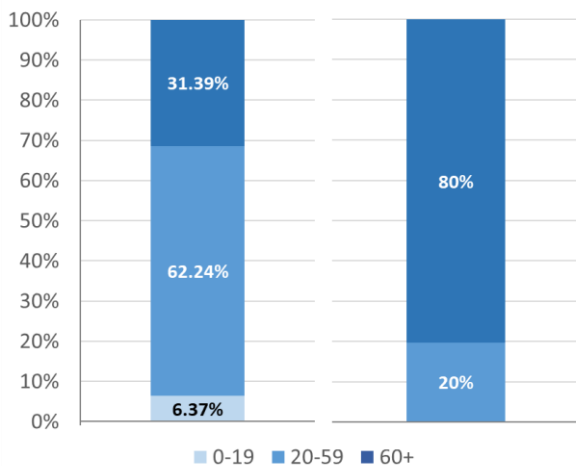
The average number of very serious cases increased steadily in March, reaching 345 during the week of March 22-28. The total number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 at the end of the month was 4,167, out of which 331 were in very serious condition.

Cases and Deaths by Sex



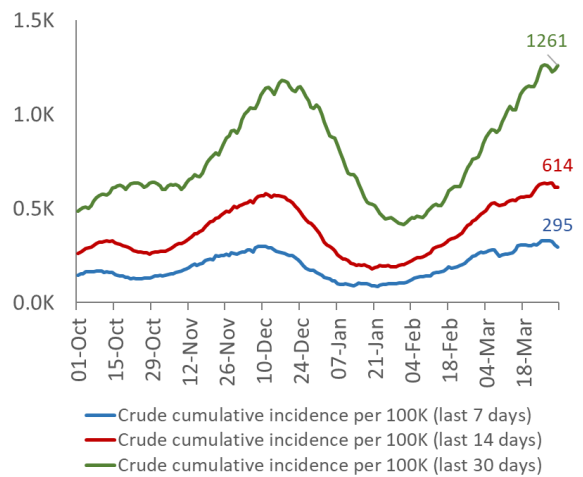
Overall, fifty-nine percent of all cases have been recorded among women and 41% among men. However, the proportion of all deaths between the two groups are approximately equal (50% each).

COVID-19 Cases/Death by Age Group



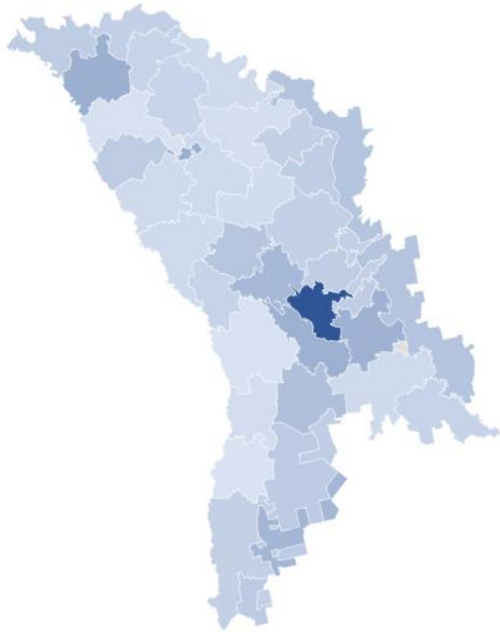
Even though infections among people aged 60 and over account for 30% of the total number of cases, 80% of all deaths have been registered in this age group. The average age of patients who have died from the disease is 67.4.

Cumulative Incidence per 100,000 over the Last 7, 14, and 30 Days



At the end of March, the crude cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 population for the last 7, 14 and 30 days was 295, 614, and 1,261, respectively. All these numbers registered a significant increase over the past month. The overall crude cumulative incidence of cases stood at 6,628 per 100,000 on the last day of March.

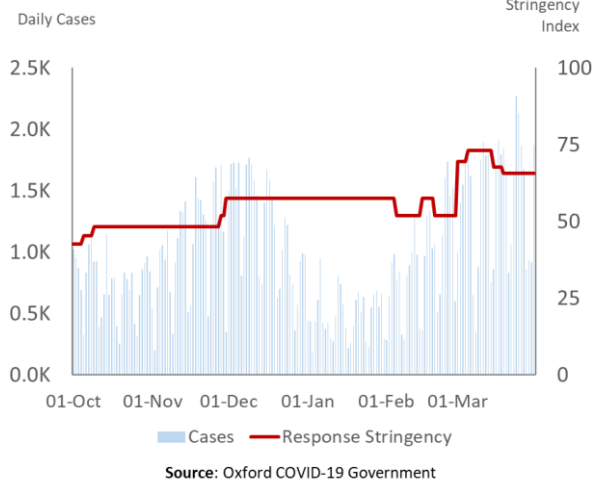
Cases per 100,000 by District



Chisinau is the most affected area with more than 15,000 cases per 100,000 population. Nine other areas have also passed the 5,000 cases per 100,000 population mark.

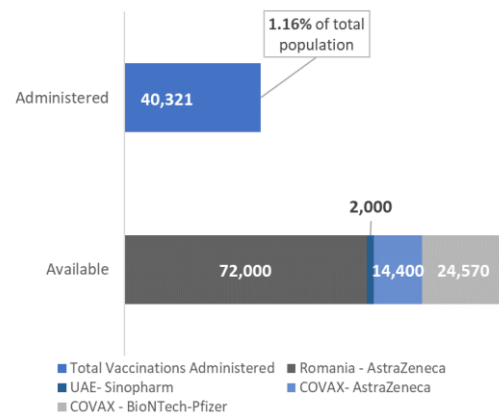
| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Chisinau | 15,205 |
| Balti | 7,189 |
| Edinet | 7,123 |
| Ialoveni | 7,061 |
| Anenii Noi | 6,899 |
| Taraclia | 6,489 |
| Straseni | 6,315 |
| Cimislia | 5,769 |
| Transnistria region | 5,272 |
| Calarasi | 5,137 |

Response Stringency and Daily Cases



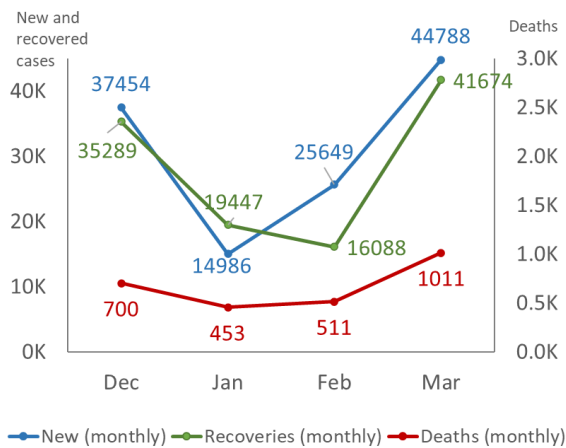
The stringency of the public health response to the epidemic first increased in the beginning of March and then slightly relaxed. Oxford’s Stringency Index reflects the rigor of lockdown measures, including school and business closures, and restrictions on gatherings and free movement.

Administered and Available Vaccines



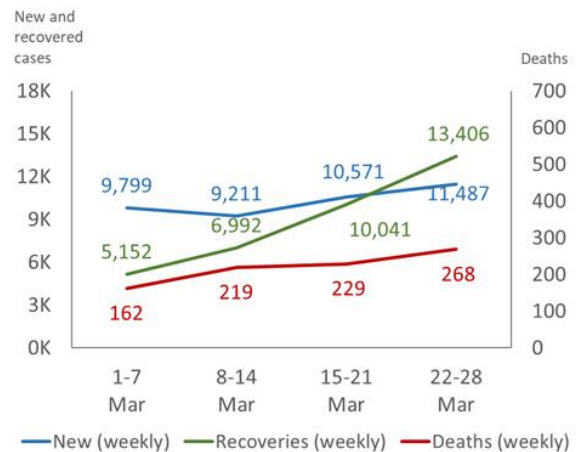
As of March 31, a total of 40,321 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered. Overall, 1.16% of the country’s population and 64% of healthcare staff has received at least one vaccine dose. Over 70,000 vaccine doses remain currently available for use.

Monthly Data: New Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



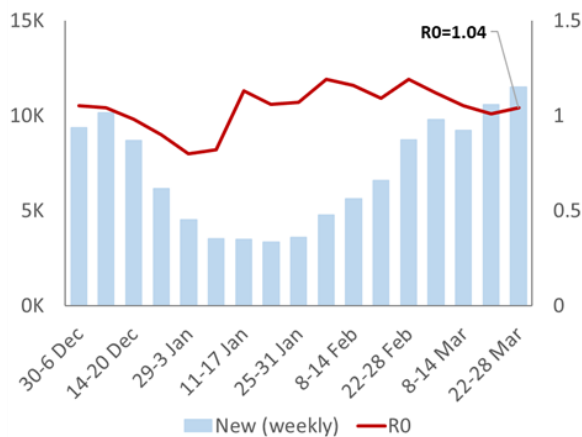
The number of cases in March increased by 75% compared to the previous month and reached 44,788. The number of deaths also nearly doubled. The monthly number of recoveries also reflected the increase in cases and rose by more than 280%.

Weekly Data: New Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



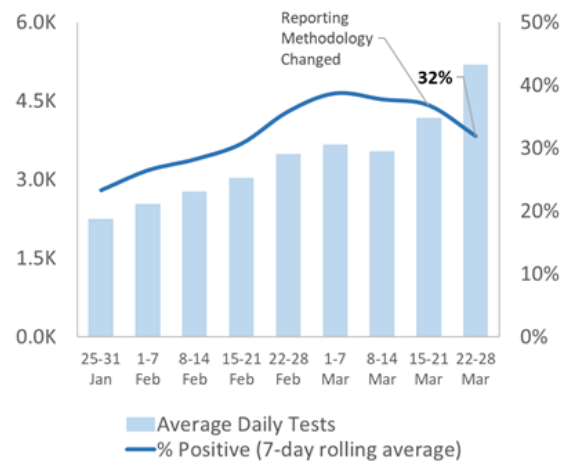
The number of weekly cases increased over the last two weeks of March and reached 11,487 for the week of Mar 22-28. This represents a 9% increase compared to the previous week. Cases decreased slightly in the last days of the month. The number of deaths and recoveries paralleled the overall rise in cases.

COVID 19 Weekly Cases and Contagion Rate (R0)



The contagion rate remained above 1 throughout the entire month of March. As of March 28, the contagion rate stood at 1.04. The rate is uneven across regions, with the lowest rates being registered in Cimislia (0.72) and the highest in Soroca (1.34). The contagion rate in Chisinau stood at 0.94.

Average Daily Tests and Positivity Rate



After peaking toward the beginning of March, the percentage of positive cases has decreased over the course of the month. This decrease has also coincided with a change of the reporting methodology on Mar 19. Starting then, reporting has no longer disaggregated tests on whether they were primary or subsequent.

1.1 Restrictions*

*These are subject to changes and amendment and should be viewed as an overview and not as a definitive source for decision making.

- A State of Emergency is declared by Parliament for 60 days (April 1- May 30). The law that defines the State of Emergency is [here](#).
- The first meeting of the Commission for Exceptional Situations, chaired by the Prime Minister ai., after the declaration of the State of Emergency occurred on April 1st. The Commission instituted a series of restrictions, i.e. a special regime for circulation of persons (circulation outside residence is banned between 23.00h-5.00h with some exceptions), a special working regime, i.e. enterprises need to ensure that only up to 30% of staff attends the offices, with some exceptions, all mass gatherings are banned, all state planned controls are postponed until after May 30 and others. The full list of restrictions taken can be found here in [Decision No 1](#).

2 General situation update

- As the statistics above show, March 2021 had the worst epidemiological trends for any month since the pandemic began.
- Vaccination against COVID19 started March 2nd with vaccination of frontline workers in intensive care units in the first phase. As of 29 March, 37,070 workers from health care facilities and beneficiaries of the placement centers for elderly were vaccinated.
- On March 4th Moldova was the recipient of the first COVAX deliveries into Europe with a further COVAX shipment arriving on March 19th.
- March 7th was the one-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 case in the Republic of Moldova.

2.1 Political update

- As decreed by the Constitutional Court, the President moved forward with consultations with each of the political parties for a second time, after the no confidence vote of her first proposed candidate. During these consultations, the candidate that had been put forward by the informal coalition of the Socialist Party and For Moldova Platform, Mariana Durllesteanu, withdrew her candidacy, which left them without a proposed candidate. Following the consultations, the President nominated the head of PAS, Igor Grosu, as her new candidate for Prime Minister. The Socialists answered her nomination with a promise to challenge his candidacy in the Constitutional Court. They also proposed a new candidate, the current ambassador to Russia, Vladimir Golovatiuc, for consideration.
- On March 22, the Constitutional Court recognized the constitutional decree of President Maia Sandu on the appointment of Igor Grosu as a candidate for prime minister. The President of the Constitutional Court noted that the Constitution allows the president to nominate her own candidate if there is no formal majority in parliament to put forward a candidate. She further explained that the informal majority (Socialists and For Moldova platform) that had been formed to put forward Mariana Durllesteanu, ceased to exist when she withdrew her candidacy, and they had failed to properly declare itself as a formal majority ahead of nominating a new candidate. Thus, President Sandu's candidate was the only candidate that was nominated according to the Constitution.
- However, on the day that Grosu's candidacy was to be discussed in Parliament, the Socialist Party and For Moldova Platform left the floor, creating a situation where there was no quorum for the vote. Subsequent to this action, the President submitted a request to the Constitutional Court to consider that all the

conditions had been met for early elections to be called. The Constitutional Court is currently reviewing the request and is expected to make a ruling later this week or early next week.

- In a somewhat related occurrence, the Government has asked the Parliament to consider declaring a state of emergency. The state of emergency would strengthen measures and restrictions to address the COVID-19 crisis, including postponing the organization of any elections during the state of emergency period.

2.2 Economic and social update

- On March 25, the UN Moldova presented the [Country Common Analysis](#) which provides an in-depth analysis of the country's socio-economic development and political context, along with critical challenges and their root causes. This analysis serves as a basis for priority setting within the UN and feeds into resource mobilization, development of cooperation partnerships, as well as projects' technical design contributing to sustainable development of the country.
- According to the [NBS](#), annual inflation in February almost tripled reaching 0.62%. The increase in consumers' prices was pooled by the food prices (+1,80%) and by the non-food prices (1.15%) while services rendered to population maintained overall downward trend (-1.89%).
- The [NBS data](#) reveal that the GDP contracted by 7% (in gross series) in 2020 being heavily affected by the drought and consequently more leading to more severe consequences than in the neighboring Romania and Ukraine where GDP dropped by 3.9% and . This decline was triggered by the COVID-19 related decline in agriculture (-2.7%), followed by the retail and wholesale trade (-2.1%) and manufacturing.

2.3 Education system situation update

- In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect students and staff and following consultations with LPA, local education authorities, National Pupils' Councils and parents, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research decided to extend the spring school vacation for primary, lower and upper secondary education by 7 days, for the overall period 05-15 March 2021, with recuperation of classes when students return physically to school. Each school will develop their own recuperation schedule.
- Based on Decision of the national Extraordinary Public Health Commission No. 50 of 12 March 2021, the education process was re-established on 16 March 2021 based on three scenarios approved by the Public Health National Centre:
 - For localities with Green or Yellow Codes (incidence lower than 49 cases to 100,000 population in the last 14 days), the process will continue with the physical presence of preschool and school children, respecting strictly the public health norms for COVID-19 prevention.
 - For localities with Orange Code (incidence of 50-100 COVID-19 cases to 100,000 population in the last 14 days), the education process will be organised with the physical presence of preschool-aged, primary school-aged children and pupils from graduating classes (IX, XII, XIII (evening schools)), of students from VET during internships and students from graduating years during practical workshops. For all other pupils and students, the educational process is remote.
 - For localities with the Red Code (incidence higher than 100 cases to 100,000 population in the last 14 days), the education process will be organised with the daily physical presence of preschool-aged, primary school-aged children and 50% of pupils from graduating classes (IX, XII, XIII (evening schools)) and students from graduating years in VET and higher education. For all other pupils and students, the educational process is remote.

- Following the decision of the Public Health Territorial Commission and local specialised bodies in the area of education, as of 22 March, 137 (10,95%) general education institutions provided online education, including 131 in Chisinau Municipality, 2 in each of the Districts of Nisporeni and Drochia, and one institution in each of the Districts of Rezina and Căuşeni.
- On 22 March, 5 institutions (0,40%) and 26 classes (0,16%) were placed in quarantine because of increased cases of COVID-19.
- About 312 (0,09%) children from primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, 364 (1,32%) teachers and 126 (0,62%) auxiliary staff were tested positive for COVID-19. About 2940 (0,88%) school children, 235 (0,87%) teachers and 122 (0,60%) auxiliary staff were placed in self-isolation.
- In higher education, 21 students, 27 teachers and 8 auxiliary staff were tested positive for COVID-19 and 4 students, 8 teachers and 8 auxiliary staff were in self-isolation.
- In VET, 36 students, 28 teachers and 34 other staff were confirmed positive for COVID-19.
- In preschool education, 29 (1,93%) kindergartens and 104 (1,61%) groups were in quarantine. About 23 (0,02%) children, 186 (1,45%) teachers and 148 (0,79%) auxiliary staff were tested positive for COVID-19, while 3435 (2,29%) children, 207 (1,61%) teachers and 263 (1,41%) auxiliary staff were in self-isolation.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research reiterates the call for all managers, teachers and students to respect all the protection measures against COVID-19.

2.4 Gender and Human Rights

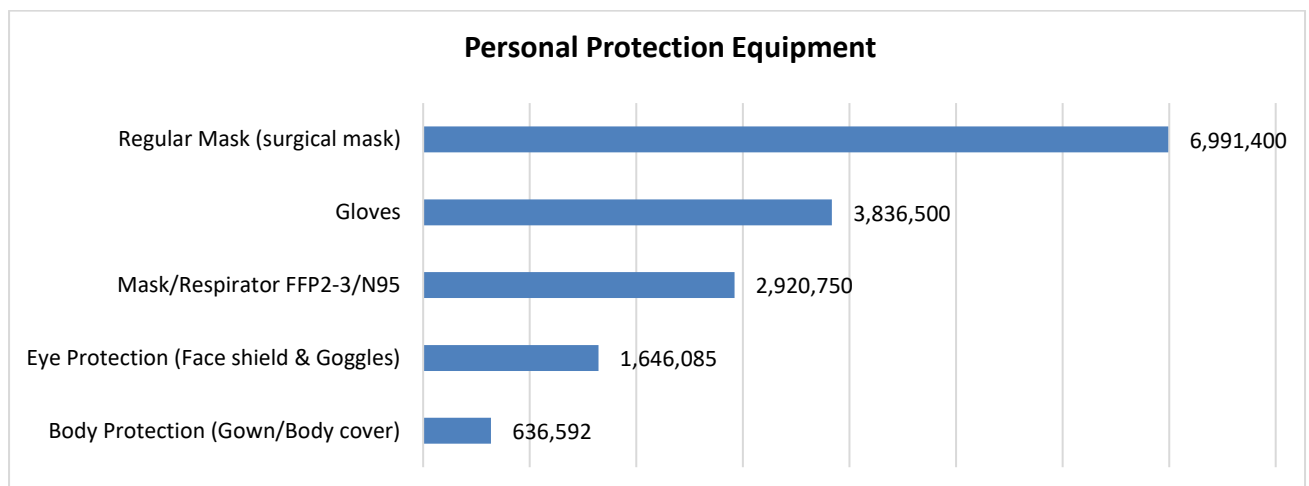
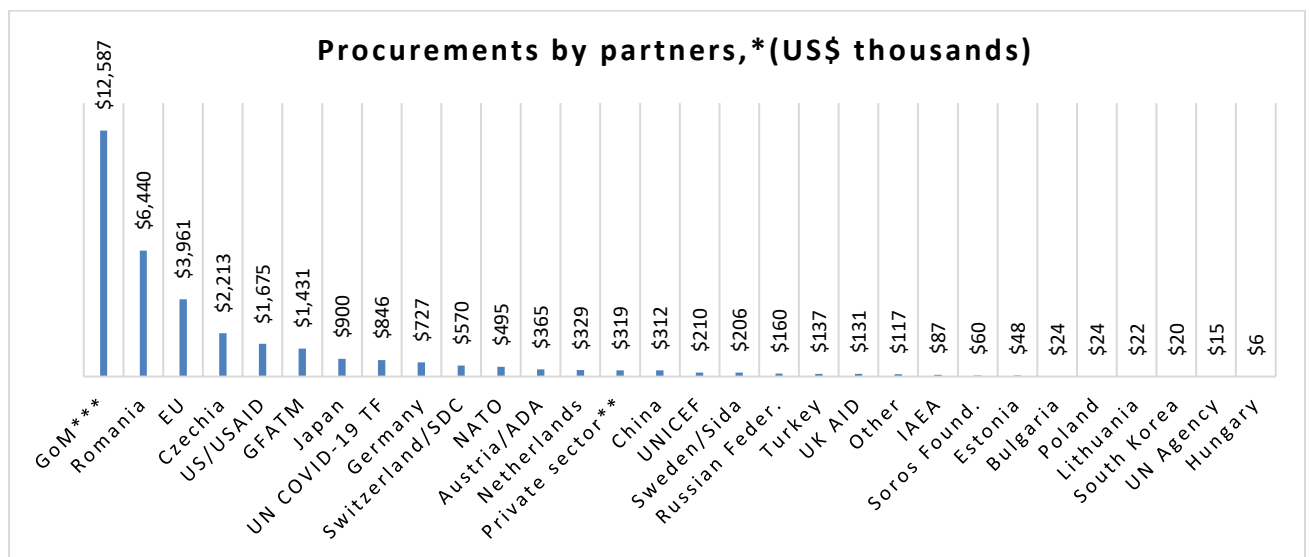
- In 2021, UN Women celebrates the tremendous efforts by women around the world in fighting for their rights during the pandemic. In this context, a [video](#) aiming to show the diversity of activities a woman can do during this critical period was launched.
- The first successful legislative initiative, for the amendment of the Labor Code was developed and submitted by the Common Dialogue Platform of Women Deputies from the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (CAUCUS) which was voted by the Parliament with the majority of votes on March 19th, 2021. The modifications will exclude the unfair conditions of leave payments for the retiring teachers that have available contracts based on annual renewal. This happened as the result of consultation events organized between the Women MPs and local elected officials during March aimed to discuss actual challenges caused by the pandemic in the area of social protection and education from Gender Equality perspective. The 4 territorial online consultations sessions with the local elected representatives (women councilors and mayoralties, doctors) helped Women MPs to identify solutions for the most affected groups by the pandemic in society. The regional forums are part of a series of actions planned for the re-launch of Women MPs Platform under the UN Joint project “Strengthening the Parliament’s role in enhancing gender equality in the Republic of Moldova” implemented by UNDP, UN WOMEN, UNICEF and UNFPA financed from core funds. The regional forums have been organized through the Territorial Information Offices of the Parliament in Telenesti, Balti, Ceadir Lunga, and Cantemir.
- As part of a project funded by the Austrian Development Agency, OHCHR and UN WOMEN are presently building the capacity of members of the NGO Task Force COVID-19 and Human Rights on COVID-19 related protection measures as well as supporting them and their beneficiaries in how to build their resilience in the context of the prolonged crises.

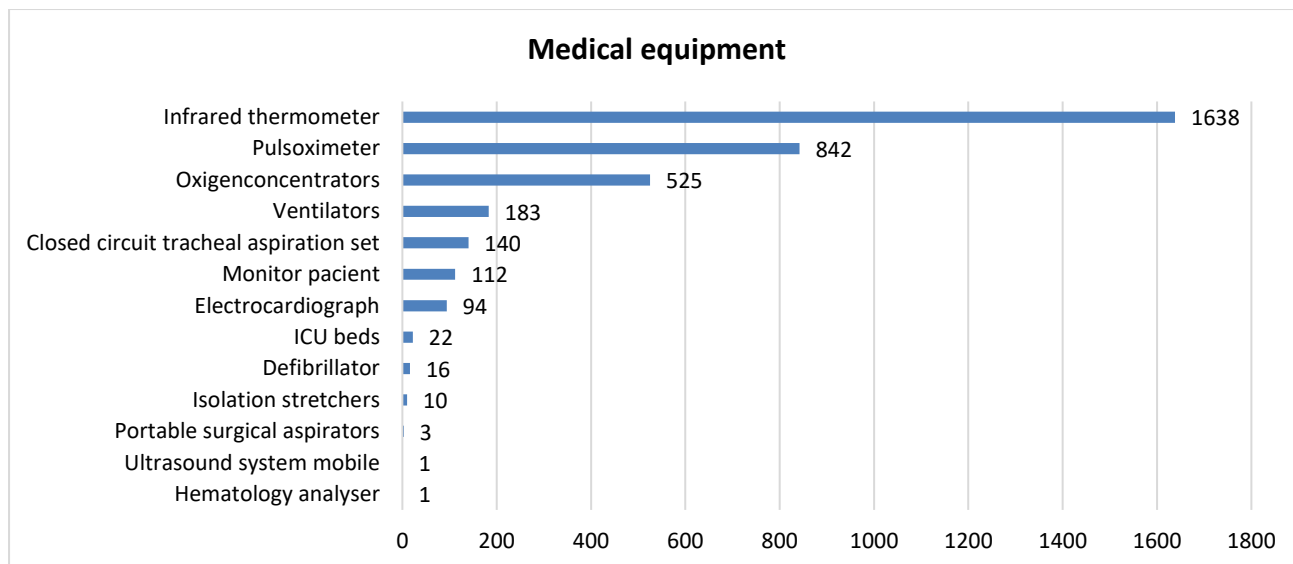
2.5 Transnistria region

- The first doses of COVID-19 vaccine were given to doctors of a Transnistria Region clinical hospital on 29 March. Eleven vaccination centers are being opened in various localities on the left bank and 900 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine have been distributed among these centers. Healthcare professionals working in COVID-19 hospitals are to be vaccinated first on a voluntary basis. The remaining doses will be made available to local residents.
- The Special Representative of the Swedish Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistria Region Settlement Process, Thomas Mayr-Harting and the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova held on-line consultations with Olga Cebotari and Vitaly Ignatiev to discuss the functioning of Vehicle Registration Offices, freedom of movement in the context of the pandemic, human rights, and economic connectivity between the two banks of the Nistru River.
- On 26 March two working groups, the Civil Status and Documentation and Road Transportation, met. During the meetings, the experts discussed re-registration of vehicles with neutral-design license plates following transfer of ownership and ways to allow for exchange of information between civil status offices on both banks.

2.6 Aid Coordination - data on procurements for COVID-19

Mapping of contributions to the Health System for COVID response in Moldova





**Note - data only for contracted/procured PEEs, medical equipment and technical assistance COVID related. Committed and/or pledged contributions are not reflected. Data are captured from various sources, i.e. media and may not be accurate. The process of reflecting donors/contributions is ongoing, and data is updated once details of procured items are confirmed. For more information, please send an email to veaceslav.palade@un.org and/or garami@who.int*

*** Private sector companies: Endava, Orange Moldova, Lismedfarm SRL, Moldretail Grup SRL, Kaufland, Moldcell Moldova, Starnet SRL, Gedeon Rihter, Farmacia Familiei SRL, Svibmagtex SRL, Miso Textile SRL, Zernoff SRL, Aromcom SRL, Art Vest SRL, Dita Est Farm SRL, Tetis International Co SRL, Rihpangalfarma SRL, Sonaris Com*

**** The procurements of the Government of RM include the materials and supplied procured from the WB loan: Moldova Emergency COVID-19 Response Project*

3 UN Social and Economic Response and Recovery Portfolio update

Please access <https://covid19response.un.md/> to see the Plan and the Project Portfolio in more detail, including on-going projects and initiatives still requiring financing.

3.1 Pillar 1: HEALTH FIRST: protecting health services and systems during the crisis

- Moldova was the first country in European region to receive free vaccines through the [COVAX platform](#). [On March 4th, Moldova received](#) 14,400 doses of the anti-COVID-19 vaccine, shipped via the COVAX Facility, a partnership between CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO. Additionally, [Moldova received](#) 24,570 doses of BioNTech- Pfizer anti-COVID-19 vaccine on 19 March, shipped via the COVAX Facility, a partnership between CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO.
- Following the request of Municipal Hospital for Contagious Diseases for Children, UNICEF donated with financial support from USAID, 450 litres of disinfectant, 350 of liquid soap, more than 2,400 diapers and other WASH supplies for children and health facility.
- WHO and UN RC attended a series of working meetings with the President of the Republic of Moldova and Prime Minister (12 March) as well as Superior Security Council chaired by the President of the Republic of Moldova (13 March) to discuss the COVID-19 Epidemiological situation and public health measures to reduce the COVID-19 spreading by implementing inter-sectoral measures.
- WHO as part of the Public Health Advisory Council to the Prime Minister has attended several technical meetings where the COVID-19 epidemiological situation and public health and social measures have been discussed in order to reduce the COVID-19 spreading and improve the health system response capacities.
- Weekly Coordination meeting on vaccines for the Republic of Moldova is conducted jointly with representatives of the MoHLSP, EU Commission and WHO CO.

- The 4th meeting of the Steering Committee for EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for the Eastern Partnership Initiative for Health took place on the 30 March 2021. The Steering Committee addressed issues concerning first year of the Project: epi situation, COVID-19 vaccination, critical supplies status, project progress. Particular attention was paid to Communication and Visibility: first year of the project at a glance and future outlook.
- The WHO offered support to the Ministry of Health Labour and Social Protection to conduct the assessment of Essential Health Services continuity. WHO in partnership with UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNFPA have provided expert input to the methodology of Rapid EHS continuity assessment tool. The online National Pulse Survey on Essential Health Services was completed on March 15, 2021. The findings of the assessment will be used for further MoHLSP policies and interventions to ensure continuity of EHS, together with the results of the Facility-level EHS assessment planned for April, 2021.
- The exercise on costing of treated COVID-19 cases and suspected ones for pregnant woman, children and adults, by types of interventions and by severity of cases (severe ICU cases requiring assisted ventilation, medium severity cases that required connection to the oxygen source and low severity cases) conducted by a local team of experts guided by international consultant was finalized. In the same time, the analysis of DRG database for 2020 and January-February 2021 to estimate COVID-19 interventions (case management) impact on MHI funds was performed by international consultant and both exercise results will be presented to MoHLSP and NHIC for identification of appropriate payment methods for COVID-19 interventions (case management) next month.
- The bidding process for re-engineering of the electronic system for communicable diseases and public health events and Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) are in the finalization phase. The IT solution development work will start in order to digitalize the national surveillance system for communicable diseases and laboratory component.
- The IT solution for reporting and monitoring hospital capacities developed with WHO support was piloted in 17 hospitals, the proposals/ recommendations were generalized and presented to the developer. The next steps were agreed on for institutionalization and launching the IT system in April.
- The Influenza (ILI and ARI) and SARI surveillance & virological sentinel surveillance allows to collect samples from nine sentinel sites situated around the country. In the up to 25 samples collected and tested every week for influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2 had been identified only SARS-CoV-2 viruses.
- The MoHLSP order on SARS-CoV-2 antigen (Ag) rapid diagnostic testing (RDT) was developed based on the WHO recommendations. The order aiming at increasing the COVID-19 laboratory testing capacities and Ag RDT is performed at the primary HCFs, hospitals and Triage Center.
- WHO conducted during 29 - 30 March 2021 a laboratory support mission and on-job training on Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) assays to detect SARS-CoV-2 variants in the Republic of Moldova. The laboratory professionals from the National Reference Laboratory of the National Agency for Public Health were trained on PCR testing method and testing procedure was validated jointly with international WHO consultant.
- The 5th edition of the national protocol on COVID-19 treatment is in process of revision. A number of group discussions and meetings with WHO CO/RO staff were conducted. The current revision is made based on updates from the last available WHO clinical guideline on COVID-19 treatment. The trainings will be conducted in coming months.
- Four trainings on severe COVID-19 cases management and ICU support have been conducted with WHO support. Approx. 120 professionals (ICU units and hospital staff), managers and professionals from the national, municipal and district hospitals (Balti, Sorooca, Dondusheni, Ungheni, Nisporeni, Chisinau

municipal hospitals), have been trained on the COVID-19 severe cases treatment and clinical management.

- A series of on-line trainings were conducted: 1) post-COVID-19 rehabilitation – 120 participants, 2) COVID-19 treatment protocol – 78 participants, 3) management of the post-COVID conditions – 152 participants. Participants of the trainings were from both banks of Nistru River.
- As of 31 March 2021, there were vaccinated 40321 people, 1678 people during last 24 hours. 49282 doses of three vaccines: Astra Zeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech and Sinopharm were distributed to the health care facilities. 65.1% of healthcare workers were covered with the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Thus, 1.16% of the population of the Republic of Moldova have received 1st dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Detailed information on the [Government vaccination portal](#).
- Three rounds of the training workshops on COVID-19 immunization have been conducted for the professionals, including for professionals from the vaccination centers in hospitals and primary health care facilities from both banks of the Nistru river. Vaccine delivery, storage conditions, vaccine safety monitoring as well as adverse events following immunization monitoring procedures were approached during the trainings.
- The e-registry for COVID-19 vaccination and programming is being developed by the WHO jointly with IT experts from the MoHLSP and NAPH. The e-registry will allow to monitor the progress on COVID-19 immunization. The COVID-19 vaccination programming will facilitate the vaccine planning during the II-nd and III-rd phases.
- WHO attended and shared updated vaccine safety information during the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) meetings. The NITAG had discussed and agreed on the several aspects associated with National Deployment Vaccine Plan implementation, distribution of the AstraZeneca vaccine, participation in the vaccine effectiveness studies.
- WHO continues to provide support to MoHLSP in external aid coordination, informing partners and donors regarding the EPI situation and public health measures for COVID-19 public health emergency response. The continuous needs assessment for the health system and resource mobilizations as well as devices and goods procurement are provided by the WHO support. A databased with donor's contributions related to COVID-19 response is compiled by the WHO consultant and is available on the MoHLSP website.
- 300 oxygen concentrators with consumables for 6 months, 1200 pulse oximeters and 5 pulmonary ventilation devices have arrived on 09 March 2021 with the support of the WHO Country Office in Moldova under the Project "EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for the Eastern Partnership". The donation was funded by EU DGNEAR and German Government. Overall cost of received equipment is USD 824,900. The equipment was distributed by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection into municipal and regional hospitals and Primary Health Care institutions, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs Medical Service, National Administration of Penitentiaries, Central Military Clinical Hospital of the Ministry of Defense, Security and Information Service Medical Directorate and Transnistrian region.

3.2 Pillar 2: PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basic services

- Following the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, [UNICEF donated](#) with financial support from USAID, 1.100 liters of disinfectant, 4,600 gloves for the staff of Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Services and 10,000 different sizes masks with screens for children with hearing disabilities and for the specialists working with them.

- UNICEF, with financial support from Global Partnership for Education, [donated](#) 163 educational packages for children with special educational needs.
- UNICEF and Child, Community, Family (CCF) Moldova NGO, with financial support from USAID, continued their partnership in providing training for teachers and school managers to ensure prevention of infectious diseases in schools. To this end, UNICEF and CCF, in coordination with MECR and National Agency for Public Health (NAPH), rolled out training for schoolteachers and managers in the context of school reopening. The cumulative number of staff in the education sector, since the start of training in Q4, 2020, exceeded 15,000. About one-fifth of training sessions were held in Russian. The capacity building activities will continue until end of May 2021, aiming to reach a total of out 19,000 staff.
- UN Women in collaboration with OHCHR identified the needs of first aid products and PPEs for 4100 persons, in vulnerable situations, including elderly persons, persons with disabilities and their families, left behind children, Roma people from vulnerable families and Roma single mothers from both banks of Dniester, to improve their resilience against COVID-19. The assessment was among 27 local NGOs, members of NGO Task Force on COVID-19 and Human Rights. Procurement of the required first aid goods and delivery services is in progress - vendors are selected.
- 50 NGO staff members and volunteers from both banks of Dniester river working at the national and local level, who are members of the NGO Task Force on COVID-19 and Human Rights will benefit, during March31- 9 April, 2021 of training on COVID 19- efficient protection measures and safety services to be provided to the target group of population. These activities are implemented under the COVID-19 response and recovery window of the Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund with funding from Austria/ADA, implemented by UN Agencies in Moldova (UN Women, OHCHR, ILO).
- UNICEF continued to identify, jointly with line ministries the most vulnerable groups of children that would benefit from critical hygiene and preventions supplies. Thus, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR), [UNICEF purchased for the Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Services](#) staff and children with special educational needs over 1000 liters of hand sanitizer, 4600 non-sterile examination gloves and over 100,000 masks for preschoolers, primary, secondary pupils with hearing deficiencies and teaching personnel (photo of the special masks with transparent screen – in the annex below). The [supplies](#), purchased with USAID funds, are intended for children with special educational needs/hearing impairment in the country’s 35 districts, including Gagauzia ATU. This batch of supplies has been complemented by 163 educational kits (books, stationary) from UNICEF/Global Partnership for Education, aimed to promote access to continuing learning for children with special educational needs.

3.3 Pillar 3: ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector and workers

- During the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Taskforce meeting organized on 17 March, the following topics have been discussed: 1) IOM’s methodology for Measuring the Economic Impact of Diaspora beyond Remittances; 2) Assessment of the Social Security Responses to COVID-19 by ILO. Starting with April 2021, Taskforce meetings will be organized on a monthly basis.
- With UNDP support, local economic development forums took place in Ungheni and Cahul Focal Regions on March 3 and 5, within the EU-funded “EU4Moldova: Focal Regions” Programme. The Forums served as a platform for validating the competitive advantages and short-medium terms actions collectively identified by the local stakeholders to boost local economic development, as well as to promote the economic and investment potential of the two regions.

- UNDP Moldova, in collaboration with our UNDP Headquarters Digital Office and the State Chancellery, launched the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) to identify the main gaps and opportunities of the digital transformation of the country, as part of its response and recovery efforts. The questionnaire is available online in [Romanian](#), [Russian](#) and [English](#).
- 547 women entrepreneurs or those who want to start a business attended for 2 weeks (March 10-23) free entrepreneurship education courses, organized by ODIMM, in partnership with UN Women Moldova and with the financial support provided by the Government of Japan as part of the Project “Measures to respond to the urgent needs of women and girls who are marginalized or in a vulnerable situation, aggravated by Coronavirus (COVID-19). The participants went through 6 online training modules to develop their economic and social skills and to be prepared to start or develop a business within the parameters of a new economic reality and pandemic situation.
- FAO has developed a comprehensive report assessing the negative impact of the drought on the agriculture sector, in particular on main agriculture crops and livestock sector. The report has been presented within a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and its findings have been validated. FAO expertise provided recommendations for immediate recovery measures necessary for the new agricultural season and medium- and long-term measures that would strengthen the capacities and resilience of farmers to extreme weather events. Furthermore, FAO will develop two concept notes for short- and medium-term measures on improvement disaster risk management strategies.

3.4 Pillar 4: MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

- With UNDP support, Moldova’s flagship model of engaging migrants and diaspora in the development of communities of origin was shared during a regional peer learning event on human mobility and recovery solutions. The latest [Operational Guide](#) on diasporas’ engagement, made possible with SDC support, in local development depicting Moldova’s experience was presented during the event.

3.5 Pillar 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- NTR

4 Communications and Advocacy

- UNICEF and WHO continues to provide support to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection and the National Agency of Public Health with national communication campaign on Immunization Against COVID-19, as follows:
 - A [video](#) aiming to bring public’s attention to the importance of respecting COVID-19 measures.
 - An [online interview](#) with the Head of Epidemiology department of USMF „Nicolae Testemițanu”, Angela Paraschiv, on adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccination. The experts responded on questions regarding the process of vaccination of medical workers, post-vaccine reactions, possibility of infection with COVID-19 after being vaccinated, etc.
 - A [series of stories](#) of doctors vaccinated against COVID-19
 - A series of video spots on vaccination “Vaccinarea salvează vieți!” (Vaccination saves lives) with lead experts on COVID-19 immunization in Moldova ([Alexei Ceban](#), epidemiologist, about COVID-19 vaccination, [Ninel Revenco](#), the President of the National Expert Committee on Immunization, about the stages of the vaccination process against COVID-19 in the Republic of Moldova, [Angela Paraschiv](#),

the Head of Epidemiology department of USMF „Nicolae Testemițanu”, about the development of the COVID-19 vaccine).

- UNICEF Moldova supported a youth [real-time monitoring platform](#) U-Report in launching a COVID-19 vaccination bot, which provides trustworthy information for young people about COVID-19 vaccination.
- UNICEF in partnership with Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Youth Clinics and AO SPORTER launched a [project “TeenZ”](#) aiming to promote healthy lifestyle among adolescent and young people in Moldova in the context of distant learning and COVID-19 restrictions. The project engages professional physical training instructors and psychologists to develop content adapted to the specific needs of adolescents.
- UN Women shared the [human stories](#) of women beneficiaries of the COVID-19 response and their fighting to overcome pandemic difficulties.
- UNDP and UN Women published a [press-release](#) on COVID-19 response gender tracker, updated in March 2021. According to it, Moldova has three targeted measures in place to protect women against violence and only one to ensure their economic security.
- WHO provides regular support to the national communication group of experts on immunization, preparation of messages, including adverse effects post-immunization, and weekly press conferences. The designated experts were individually trained by WHO in public speaking, risk communication and community engagement.
- WHO provides support to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, National Police Inspectorate to print out a series of information materials on COVID-19 prevention to be distributed to population by rescue teams from the General Inspectorate for Extraordinary Situations. Also, WHO produced an audio spot on COVID-19 prevention measures – the PSA was aired on police cars in more than 100 localities.
- WHO partnered up with the Association of the Medical Students and Residents to [promote](#) COVID-19 prevention measures and vaccines roll-out. The volunteers applied inter-personal communication skills and talked to people in open air markets and shops. More than 25 localities visited.
- For additional details and in-depth stories please see the [UN Moldova March Newsletter Special Edition](#)