
**World Health Organization
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Statement of the State of Israel

18 May 2020

Madam President, Director General, Member States, Excellencies,

Israel would like to express its gratitude and deep appreciation for the tireless work and efforts of all frontline workers, including medical teams, and to the WHO for supporting and coordinating the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Israel would like to emphasize the imperative role of multilateral and global cooperation in responding to this pandemic, and the importance of ensuring access to information as well as meaningful contribution by all stakeholders in addressing this global challenge.

Israel was one of the first countries to take steps to prevent the spread of the virus. After the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on February 27th, Israel issued travel warnings and restrictions to countries with high prevalence of Covid-19, and introduced self-isolation requirements for those returning to Israel from specific regions. On March 8th, due to the continued spread of COVID-19 worldwide, the 14-day confinement requirement was extended to include all persons entering the country. Physical distancing measures were instrumental in limiting the spread of the virus within the community, and complemented the measures that were taken to prevent the importation of new cases.

These policy measures proved effective in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in Israel, and in ensuring that the Israeli health system would not be overburdened. The early measures taken allowed for the launch of our exit strategy on May 5th, including the gradual reopening of the educational system and the economy.

Recognizing that COVID-19 does not distinguish between people and is oblivious to borders, Israel has strengthened its cooperation with the Palestinian Authority in order to prevent, mitigate and address the spread of the virus in the region. The ongoing cooperation included consultations, training, guidance of Palestinian medical teams and delivery of COVID-19-related PPE.

These important recent developments did not escape the attention of the United Nations highest echelons. On 25 March 2020, UN Secretary General Guterres referred to the collaboration between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as a positive example for fighting the virus. Moreover, The UN Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov welcomed the “far-reaching measures that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority have taken to try and contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus”, and in a statement delivered to the members of the Security Council on 30 March 2020, he noted that "the coordination that has been put in place and the joint commitment to tackle the threat to both populations is exemplary".

The multidimensional challenges the COVID-19 crisis has created should serve as a strong reminder of the fact that resilient health systems are the backbone of our societies and economies, and that close collaboration is imperative in assuring health for all.

We reiterate Israel’s commitment to strengthening the cooperation to effectively address the current global challenge. We are confident that global collaboration, the sharing knowledge and necessary means, in the spirit of protecting human lives and leaving no one behind, is the right path to overcome this crisis successfully.

Thank you.