
Report To:	Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	28 July 2020
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	LP/073/20
Contact Officer:	Diane Sweeney	Contact No:	01475 712147
Subject:	Disasters Emergency Committee Scotland: COVID-19 Pandemic – Request by Councillor McCabe		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Executive Sub-Committee of a request received from Councillor McCabe that the Council considers supporting the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal for the world's most vulnerable countries facing Coronavirus.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Oxfam has contacted Councillor McCabe on behalf of the DEC Scotland seeking support for an urgent appeal launched on 14 July 2020, as described in the appendix.
- 2.2 The appeal will help protect the poorest and most vulnerable communities living in refugee and internal displacement camps in the world's most fragile places: Yemen, Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, as the COVID-19 pandemic hits.
- 2.3 Donations will be used to provide families with clean water, soap and safety information, frontline medical and aid workers with equipment and supplies to care for the vulnerable and sick and ensure that families get enough food to prevent malnutrition.
- 2.4 The DEC is seeking support for the appeal from Councils in Scotland by means of financial donation and support for promotional activities.
- 2.5 The Council has previously made the following donations to the DEC and Oxfam:
DEC - 18 November 2014 – Ebola (£10,000)
DEC - 19 May 2015 – Nepal Earthquake Appeal (£10,000)
Oxfam – 20 September 2016 – Malawi Food Crisis (£10,000)
DEC - 16 February 2017 – Yemen Crisis (£10,000)
Oxfam – 6 April 2017 – East Africa Food Crisis (£20,000)
DEC – 1 November 2017 – People Fleeing Myanmar (£10,000)
DEC - 26 March 2019 – Cyclone Idai (£10,000)

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee considers the request by Councillor McCabe.

APPENDIX

From: Kenneth.Watt@my-communications.com [<mailto:Kenneth.Watt@my-communications.com>]
Sent: 14 July 2020 16:33
To: Cllr Stephen McCabe <Stephen.McCabe@inverclyde.gov.uk>
Subject: Disasters Emergency Committee - Scotland appeal launch

Dear Councillor

Today, the Disasters Emergency Committee - made up of the UK's leading aid agencies - has launched an urgent appeal for the world's most vulnerable countries facing coronavirus.

Millions of lives are at stake as the Covid-19 pandemic hits the world's most fragile places - countries suffering conflict. Families who have been forced to flee their homes and lost everything in places like Yemen, Syria and Somalia face a deadly new threat.

The appeal will help protect the poorest and most vulnerable communities living in refugee and internal displacement camps in the world's most fragile places: Yemen and Syria in the Middle East; Somalia, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Africa, as well as Afghanistan and the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. There are 24 million internally displaced people in total in these fragile states, and an additional 850,000 Rohingya people living in the world's biggest refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Donations will be used to provide families with clean water, soap and information on keeping themselves safe, frontline medical and aid workers with equipment and supplies to care for the vulnerable and sick and ensure families get enough food to prevent malnutrition, particularly amongst children.

We are pleased to have the support of the Scottish Government which is releasing £240,000 from its Humanitarian Emergency Fund to give directly to DEC charities and other Scottish aid agencies who are now responding to the crisis, and the UK government has promised to match fund up to £10 million.

However, the success of this appeal will come from the support of individuals and we would really appreciate your support to raise its profile and to raise vital funds:

1. Share [our appeal video from Annie Lennox on your Twitter](#) and [download this for your Facebook](#) profiles
2. Share [these strong images and suggested posts for social media](#)
3. Include a message of support in a press release or your local news paper column, with suggested wording below
4. Print or hold up on a screen [this graphic](#) and take a selfie with it to encourage your followers to text to donate.

Suggested newspaper column

[Insert sentence acknowledging local challenges, communities coming together, the dedication of the NHS, Social care and the support played by volunteers, acknowledging that everyone will have been affected by this pandemic, whether through people who are no longer with us or from changes in the way we live – this is best coming in your words]

As lockdown measures slowly lift here in Scotland, elsewhere refugees and families who have fled violence and hunger in countries suffering conflict need our help.

Many are now living in crowded refugee and displacement camps with little access to medical care,

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clean water or enough food, making them extremely vulnerable to coronavirus. In these places, the virus is likely to be even more deadly than it has been here.

Imagine having to leave everything behind to keep your family safe, only to face a new, silent threat: Covid-19. This is the reality for people living in tents and makeshift shelters without running water in places like Yemen, Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh.

There are not enough hospital beds or supplies to treat those who fall ill. But, as we have seen in the UK, simple measures can make a huge difference. If we act now to protect millions of vulnerable people, many lives can be saved.

We know that the virus spreads more easily in crowded places. These camps are some of the most densely populated places on the planet – for example, the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh are one and a half times more densely populated than New York City, without any multi-story buildings. In Idlib province, Syria, families displaced by the war are sharing tents due to lack of space, elderly or vulnerable relatives included.

Basic handwashing facilities are often either unavailable or shared between many people. In displacement camps in Somalia, it is common for people to wash their hands with ashes due to a lack of soap. This is not an effective way to prevent the spread of the virus, which is likely to quickly infect a high proportion of the population in such crowded conditions if it goes unchecked.

These are places without any strong health and economic systems to deal effectively with the devastating effects of this deadly virus, this is why the Disaster Emergency Committee appeal now deserves our attention and our support.

The seven DEC member charities in Scotland need your help to provide families with clean water, soap and information on keeping themselves safe; provide frontline medical and aid workers with equipment and supplies to care for the vulnerable and sick; and ensure families get enough food to prevent malnutrition, particularly amongst children.

People who have suffered so much need your help now more than ever to face this new threat. Please join me and donate at dec.org.uk

Please include the following donation information in any onward communication:

Donations can be made: [online?www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk); via the 24 hour hotline on 0370 60 60 610. People can also donate £5 by texting the word SUPPORT to 70000.

Thank you again for any support you can give, it will help us save and rebuild so many lives, we do really appreciate it.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kenneth Watt
On behalf of the Disasters Emergency Committee Scotland

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