**Thursday 26 March 2020**

**Oxfam calls on Government to back UN’s COVID-19 response plan to support most vulnerable**

Oxfam has called on Prime Minister Scott Morrison and other global leaders to support the UN’s newly-released USD$2.01 billion COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

A virtual G20 Summit starts tonight, with the leaders of the countries with the 20 biggest economies coming together to strategise on how to respond to the COVID-19 crisis on an economic front.

Oxfam Chief Executive Lyn Morgain said while Australia and other wealthy countries are facing unprecedented challenges, it was important not to forget the most vulnerable people.

“We understand that all Australians are now living with uncertainty and many are anxious about our shared future – but now is not the time to close our minds to what is happening beyond our borders,” said Ms Morgain.

“We are lucky to have an incredible healthcare system. Yet half of the world’s population do not have access to basic health care, and many are starting from an impossibly unstable baseline – including warzones such as Yemen and Syria, and refugee camps, like those in Bangladesh and Greece.

“Oxfam is now ramping up our sanitation and hygiene programs in 65 countries around the world to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

Ms Morgain urged the Australian Government to take bold action through the G20 and to continue to work with the UN and NGOs on the humanitarian response.

“G20 leaders must provide a massive injection of funds to help poor countries contain, and respond to, the virus. They must also agree a global economic rescue plan to help poor and vulnerable communities in the difficult months ahead,” she said.

“The G20 group, which includes some of the richest countries in the world, can unlock the resources to make this happen starting with the immediate cancellation or postponement of poor countries' debt repayments.

"As has been said, COVID-19 anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. We are all in this together. And we hope that the generosity of Australians – seen most recently during the bushfire crisis - will be reflected in our government’s actions."

**For interviews or more information, please contact** **Lily Partland on 0418 118 687 or** **lily.partland@oxfam.org.au**

**Notes to Editors**

Oxfam is already working closely with partners and communities to support poor and vulnerable communities around the globe – to help prevent the spread of the virus, to keep people safe and to help them weather the economic storm. The distribution of soap, clean water and hygiene kits have been ramped up in some of the largest refugees and internally displaced people's camps – such as the Zaatari camp in Jordan, the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and shelters in Yemen, Iraq and Burkina Faso. Oxfam is also promoting good hygiene practice awareness and ensuring accurate health information is shared in local languages.