**Together Against Coronavirus. USAID and UNICEF continue support to Armenia to reduce infection rate**

**Yerevan, 7 August 2020** – US Agency for International Development, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Health of Armenia are launching a new cooperation aimed to support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This one-year project will support Armenia to reduce the rate of transmission across the country, equip the healthcare system with vital equipment and supplies; as well as equip healthcare workers with necessary knowledge about the pandemic and support families with reliable information on how to mitigate the risks and prevent the spread of the virus.

“COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious challenge to all health systems in the world. While healthcare workers continue to work tirelessly on the frontline, we all need to unite to flatten the curve and ensure the continuity of all health services,” said Deborah Grieser, USAID Armenia Mission Director.

Through this project, UNICEF has already procured and provided 10,000 COVID-19 test kits and 24 oxygen-concentrators and 2,000 nasal prongs to the Ministry of Health. The latter are required for oxygen therapy for patients with COVID-19, which the Ministry will distribute upon need among healthcare facilities (hospitals and polyclinics) that service patients infected with coronavirus.

Within the framework of this project, UNICEF also intends to distribute 500 dispensers, suitable for liquid soap and alcohol-based hand rub to healthcare facilities - including maternity wards - in five marzes: Lori, Shirak, Tavush, Aragatsotn, and Gegharkunik, followed by other marzes later on.

“Without urgent action, this health crisis risks becoming a child-rights crisis. Disruptions to society have had a heavy toll on children – their well-being, safety, and risked their future. Only through effective coordination can we keep Armenian girls and boys healthy, as well as ensure that they continue learning and grow up in a loving environment,” noted Liv Elin Indreiten, Acting UNICEF Representative.

With the funding of USAID, UNICEF will also procure five digital mobile X-Ray systems – critical for management of COVID-19 cases. These items will also be provided to the Ministry to distribute to hospitals in need.

UNICEF Armenia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and a national team of experts, has already developed clinical modules and guidelines on breastfeeding, infant and young child nutrition, home visiting practices, hand and respiratory hygiene and safe immunization during the COVID-19 pandemic. These modules are consolidated into one training package for health providers, approved by the Ministry as national standards. Training will be delivered nationally, covering almost 3000 family physicians, pediatricians, and nurses in all marzes, including Yerevan.

Besides these vital forms of support to the healthcare system, USAID and UNICEF intend to ensure that families are provided with reliable information about how to mitigate the risks of infection, how to maintain precautionary behavior during the pandemic and how to withstand the myriad of issues arising from the lockdown. UNICEF websites ([www.unicef.am/կորոնավիրուս](http://www.unicef.am/%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%B8%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%BD) and [www.babycef.am](http://www.babycef.am/)) will complement official sources of information with the latest advice and tips from healthcare professionals, tailored for parents and children.

Based on the UNICEF, USAID and Ministry of Health recommendations, we will deliver answers to common questions and concerns that parents have in relation to COVID-19, from breastfeeding, newborn and child-care and nutrition to play, hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations.