



**For Immediate Release**

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InterAction

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## **InterAction Media Alert: Impacts on Women, Children, and Youth; A Bit of Good News; COVID-19 Impacts; and Activism in the Aid and Development Sectors**

[InterAction](#) will be providing weekly tailored Media Alerts highlighting the work our Members are implementing around the world. If you would like to learn more about any of the following information, please feel free to reach out directly to the POC provided.

### **New Data Estimates COVID-19 to Push More Children Into Malnutrition**

Every year, 47 million children under five suffer from wasting (underweight for their height), and 3 million children die from hunger-related causes. And it's getting worse. The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are expected to trigger a rise in child malnutrition across the world. According to newly published data in the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) report, if action isn't taken, the pandemic will cause a shocking 14.3% increase in child wasting. That's an additional 7 million children suffering from severe malnutrition. In West and Central Africa, new data indicates that more than 15 million cases of acute malnutrition in children are expected this year. The [United Nations World Food Programme](#), the leading global hunger-relief organization, is on the frontlines working to save children from the brink of starvation. Help us share this story with the world. We can connect you with U.N. World Food Programme experts (on nutrition and in the field) and provide data, photos, videos, and b-roll to help package a story.

For more information, please contact Toula Athas, [tathas@wfpusa.org](mailto:tathas@wfpusa.org), World Food Program USA.

### **Closing Orphanages Hastily During the Pandemic Puts Children at Risk**

Numerous orphanages in developing countries have been shut down during lockdowns, and children sent back to their communities. These hasty closings increase the risk of abuse, trafficking, and other mistreatment of the children because their extended families and communities are already stressed by COVID-19, job losses, and other impacts. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is a leading international NGO in the movement to return institutionalized children to their families. But in places such as Kenya, CRS is concerned the quick release could cause more harm than good. The Lancet Group of health publications raised the same concern in a recent article: [The Implications of COVID-19 for the Care of Children Living in Residential Institutions](#).

For more information, please contact Nikki Gamer, [nikki.gamer@crs.org](mailto:nikki.gamer@crs.org), Catholic Relief Services.

### **World Environment Day: Reflections on Land, Youth, and Sustainable Agriculture**

In June, our international community celebrated World Environment Day 2020. To mark the occasion, YILaA [interviewed Cadasta CEO](#) Amy Coughenour Betancourt to discuss key issues related to land rights and how it relates to youth empowerment, environmental conservation, and the development of sustainable agriculture. This article summarizes some of the main points discussed with Amy as well as her recommendations for the international community for improved land management practices in Africa, a mission shared by YILaA and Cadasta Foundation.

For more information, please contact Madaleine Weber, [mweber@cadasta.org](mailto:mweber@cadasta.org), Cadasta Foundation.

### **Because We Matter: Addressing COVID-19 and Violence against Girls in Asia-Pacific**

Asia is home to more than half of the world's 1.1 billion girls. Gender inequality means girls are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. Emerging data shows that COVID-19 is intensifying gender inequality. In a new report by Plan International and Save the Children, recommendations to protect and meaningfully engage girls are explored. Please find the report [HERE](#).

For more information, please contact Bernice Morquette, [bmorquette@planusa.org](mailto:bmorquette@planusa.org), Plan International USA.

### **Armless American pilot taking retired Senator Harkin (Dem-Iowa) flying to mark 30th Anniversary of the ADA**

Arizona-native [Jessica Cox](#), the world's first pilot born without arms and Goodwill Ambassador for Humanity & Inclusion, is taking Senator Tom Harkin (retired, Dem-Iowa) for a flight on Friday, July 24, from Frederick Municipal Airport in Maryland. This is Jessica's thank you flight for a man whose leadership made it possible for her and millions of other Americans with Disabilities to access their rights and pursue their dreams. The ADA was truly a landmark piece of civil rights legislation, and it turns 30 years old on July 26. Senator Harkin was the lead sponsor of the ADA and remains one of its fiercest advocates—he's also pilot and loves to fly). With the ADA, Jessica could attend school, earn a degree, get her driver's license, and eventually her sports pilot license, too. Today, she travels the world as a motivational speaker and advocates for disability rights, in particular the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Jessica met Tom while advocating for the U.S. to ratify the CRPD (the U.S. still has not) in 2013.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Jessica or Senator Harkin, please contact Michele Lunsford, [m.lunsford@hi.org](mailto:m.lunsford@hi.org), Handicap International

### **Health Experts Share Much-Anticipated Recommendations for New Dietary Guidelines**

The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) released its Scientific Report in advance of the upcoming 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For the first time, the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans will include specific recommendations for the diets of infants and children from birth to 24 months of age. This

inclusion, along with the guidance for pregnant and lactating women, is critical as the 1,000-day window between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday sets the foundation for a child's long-term health and wellbeing. Access to high-quality nutrition during this period is fundamental. Learn more [HERE](#).

For more information, please contact Allyson Garner, [allyson@thousanddays.org](mailto:allyson@thousanddays.org), 1000 Days.

### **Vietnam Gifts 2.5M Masks to United States Through Los Angeles Relief Organization**

In 1979, Operation USA (then Operation California) sent its first-ever relief airlift to aid the Vietnamese "Boat People" refugees—launching four decades of meaningful international (and domestic) disaster relief programs. In 2020, facing few cases of COVID-19 and minimal deaths due to Vietnam's successful mitigation of the pandemic, Vietnamese companies that could source or manufacture PPE sought to send aid internationally. With the support of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, Ambassador Dan Kritenbrink, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and more than a dozen Vietnamese companies, 2.5 million masks and other PPE were shipped to the United States via Operation USA. The first million masks arrived in Los Angeles by air in June and will be distributed 75% locally, with the remaining 25% forwarded to partners in New York. The additional 1.5 million masks and other PPE arrived via sea shipment this week. They will be stored at Operation USA's Port of Los Angeles warehouse for distribution in the Southern California region as well as across the U.S. as further partnerships are established. Operation USA is proud to see our relationship with Vietnam coming full circle, forty years after that first airlift. We are honored to receive, store, and help distribute this gift to those in need across the United States. Learn more [HERE](#).

For more information, please contact Mary Dolan, [mdolan@opusa.org](mailto:mdolan@opusa.org), Operation USA.

### **Combatting COVID-19 Misinformation**

The experience of fighting Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other places, taught humanitarian organizations the importance of providing accurate information about the disease and countering misinformation. Rumors and conspiracy theories about Ebola stiffened community resistance to treatment efforts and even led to violence against health workers and vandalism and looting of clinics. Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health, subsidiaries of Corus International, are taking those lessons learned into [our battle against COVID-19](#), using communications networks that were created for a diverse array of development projects to provide accurate information about the nature and treatment of the disease. Examples of these networks include an early warning system that was created to alert villagers living alongside rivers on the India/Nepal border to deadly oncoming monsoon flooding and a text messaging network originally designed to educate coffee and cocoa farmers in Central America about best practices for treating pests and plant diseases.

For more information, please contact John Rivera, [jrivera@lwr.org](mailto:jrivera@lwr.org), Corus International (Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health).

### **Yemen: Funding Shortfalls and Impact of COVID-19 Endanger the Lives of Thousands**

Health care for children in war-torn Yemen has been further devastated by a combination of funding cuts and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing tens of thousands of children to miss out on life-saving treatments as a result. Save the Children has seen a gradual [decrease of access](#) to its own health services, leaving children suffering from preventable diseases like dengue fever and cholera unable to receive treatment. At the same time, the number of [malnourished children](#) under five is estimated to reach 2.4 million by the end of this year. Save the Children has been working in Yemen since 1963. We are the largest aid organization in Yemen and have been responding to the current crisis since 2015.

For more information, please contact Erin Taylor, [etaylor@savechildren.org](mailto:etaylor@savechildren.org), Save the Children.

### **International Development was built on Supremacy Culture—It’s Time for a Change**

After over 30 years working in international development, a development expert decided to no longer accept systems of “aid” that undermine the dignity of individuals and communities. Often, well-meaning projects actually interfere with people’s abilities to sustainably identify and meet their own needs. Now, she’s working with an organization and a movement that does the opposite—starts with people and dignity, listening and partnerships—and produces significant change. [Read more](#) about her call to “dismantle and rebuild international development—from the ‘community up’ this time.”

For more information, please contact Sara Wilson, [sara.wilson@thp.org](mailto:sara.wilson@thp.org), The Hunger Project.

### **ICNL Resources on the impact of COVID-19 on Migrants Civic Freedoms and new UNSR Report**


These new resources examine the impact of restrictions on the ability of migrants and the civil society organizations that provide services to migrants to freely associate. The UNSR report unpacks key issues and explores how the closure of civic space has impacted migrants and their defenders. The ICNL article takes a deeper look at how COVID-19 has affected migrants’ exercise of their civic freedoms.

- [Migrants’ Civic Freedom and COVID-19](#): This ICNL article examines the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the civic freedoms of migrants and groups that provide services to migrants and stresses the importance of putting into place policies that safeguard migrants’ basic rights.
- [UNSR on Human Rights for Migrants Report](#): This report provides a thematic study on the right to freedom of association of migrants, in which the Special Rapporteur examines recent trends in restrictions in law and in practice on freedom of association for migrants and civil society organizations that work to protect migrants’ rights.

For more information, please contact Emily Honstein Stanton, [estanton@icnl.org](mailto:estanton@icnl.org), ICNL.

### **New ICNL Report on Protecting Activists from Abusive Litigation**

In [Protecting Activists from Abusive Litigation: SLAPPs in the Global South and How to Respond](#), ICNL presents the first cross-regional survey of SLAPPs (strategic lawsuits against public participation) in the Global South, along with the first rigorous comparative analysis of anti-SLAPP policy responses undertaken in the Global North and the Global South.



For more information, please contact Emily Honstein Stanton, [estanton@icnl.org](mailto:estanton@icnl.org), ICNL.

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InterAction is a convener, thought leader, and voice for NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people. Our Members are premier international global development, humanitarian, and sector-supporting organizations that work in almost every country and manage more than \$15 billion in programs worldwide. [InterAction.org](http://InterAction.org).