



الجمعيّة العلميّة الملكيّة
Royal Scientific Society

في خدمة الوطن منذ ١٩٧٠ • For Jordan, since 1970

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A Call for Unified National and Global Science and Technology Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic is threatening the lives of vulnerable communities around the World, while its ramifications are severely impacting on the physical and mental well-being of a large part of the global population. The consequences of measures taken to slow its spread and gain valuable time for healthcare authorities to better manage the crisis have led to a crippling of economic activity and to grave financial insecurity for hundreds of millions of people.

Wealthier states are better able to provide support and to protect populations, both in terms of healthcare provision and economic security, but we must recognise that the global community should act together so as to better fight the pandemic in the medium-term.

We believe that the challenges we face now, and in the months to come, will demand responses that are novel in both design and implementation. The current policy landscape is not sufficiently robust to respond globally and to act in the interests of a global population faced with a common threat. The ongoing emergency response and future recovery planning must be underpinned by scientific and innovative action. Good science must inform and empower good policies as we respond to Covid- 19.

Today, more than ever, science and technology must form the basis for appropriate crisis management, and for response and recovery planning. We wholeheartedly add our voice to calls for scientists and innovators to lead, engage and communicate as we look to them to underpin policy formulation and to inform decision-making. This is only possible through a multidisciplinary and supportively institutionalised integration of science and technology in



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the planning process, and by multilateral, cross-border and cross-sectoral co-operation, collaboration and communication between and among scientists and practitioners.

We have all been inspired by the selfless dedication of physicians, nurses, technicians, carers, engineers and others as they risk their lives daily to care for Covid-19 patients and the wider community. We must never forget the sacrifices being made today, and we must commit to building a legacy that recognises this, and that is worthy of the suffering, fear and insecurity that this crisis has wrought.

The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) is committed to a mission that has endured from its foundation in 1970: to be Jordan's science reference point, to serve the Kingdom and its people at all times and in all circumstances. We reaffirm our mission in this most challenging of periods for the Kingdom and the World. We pledge to continue our dedication to providing science advice to government, to innovating solutions to new and emerging challenges, and to expanding our outreach and cooperation regionally and globally to exchange knowledge and expertise and to make science – that unparalleled gift of human ingenuity – central to planning, development and wholistic peace-building.

We call upon national and global science practitioners and enablers to make equal engagement and evidence-based assessment, research and advice the central tenets of humanity's response to humanity's greatest challenge for a generation. We reach out to all science academies and institutions to engage with each other and with our communities. This not a challenge with a single solution. Covid- 19 has unlocked a grave and multi-dimensional humanitarian crisis that has fed on many existing deficiencies in our uneven and fearful world. As champions of science, we must defend the integrity of our human family and embrace those who suffer across borders and beyond socio-economic barriers.

Sumaya bint El Hassan

President, Royal Scientific Society of Jordan



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RSS's National and Institutional Contributions to the COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The Royal Scientific Society is in constant engagement with the Prime Minister's office, relevant government ministries and other institutions to provide advice, support and capacity to deal with the Covid- 19 crisis. The nature of our work is crucial to the health and safety of the people of Jordan, and thus, RSS has received relevant permits to continue its key operations in the midst of the government-sanctioned lockdown and to provide timely and efficient support for the national contingency plan. Below are some of the key contributions from RSS to Jordan's COVID-19 crisis response plans:

1. The RSS's National Software Quality Assurance Center engaged with the Jordanian Ministry of Education to stress test its online educational platforms in order to assure its readiness before regular schooling had been suspended. Accordingly, the platforms were improved based on RSS's recommendations and were successfully launched on March 22nd. During the short period given to perform the required tests in support of the Ministry's emergency plans, RSS deployed 6 of its software testing experts to work closely with the Ministry's team round the clock. RSS continues to provide any services that the government may need during these difficult times.
2. The RSS designed and launched an emergency management plan for its campus which hosts several sister organisations, including the Princess Sumaya University for Technology. The plan includes decisive measures to combat the spread of the disease including detailed provisions to protect workers, stakeholders and facilities. RSS was among the first institutions in Jordan to issue its own emergency response measures as it puts human safety at the heart of its mission and operations. Due to its well established ICT infrastructure and well-trained staff, RSS continues to operate virtually.



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3. The RSS is continuing its testing operations for food, water, air quality and medical gases to ensure safety and continuity. A select team of engineers, technicians and analysts were tasked to continue work - taking all necessary precautions – and provide the urgently required services. This is of significance to avoid the interruption of the supply chain of food, ensure that the air and water quality are within national standards, and that the supplies of medical gases continue as usual.
4. The RSS's biomedical engineering team works closely with the Jordanian Ministry of Health to ensure timely maintenance of equipment. A joint team is working round the clock in all 12 governorates to provide the necessary maintenance for equipment in public hospitals and clinics.
5. The RSS's Biosafety and Biosecurity Centre has been engaged in testing Coronaviruses in bats as part of a Global Research Project. It has equipped its laboratory to be able to test for COVID 19 (if required) as an additional support to the health authorities.
6. The RSS's start-up incubator (iPARK) is supporting Khaleek bil bait – 'Stay at Home' - a mindset incubation and acceleration platform that launched an innovation hackathon on April 2nd 2020 <https://www.khaleekbilbait.com/> Moreover, 10 of iPARK's incubated start-ups came together to give back to society and to support the government in combatting the unprecedented ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic through supporting online learning and e-commerce activities, these start-ups are: B12, SUPERIORS, Carers, Mrayti, WARAGAMI, Bilforon, Utrac, Via Vii, Smart Cart, and Connecttofit.
7. The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and sister organisations (the Princess Sumaya University for Technology, the Amman Baccalaureate School, the Higher Council for Science and Technology, and the Jordan Museum) launched a fundraising campaign to support the national effort during the COVID-19 emergency.



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8. The WANA Institute, the think-tank arm of the RSS published a report entitled 'Chronicling the Coronavirus: A Perspective from Jordan' which records and explains Jordan's response to the crisis in its initial weeks. It is hoped that this will stand as a valuable record and form a basis to reflect and plan for future challenges.

<http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/chronicling-coronavirus-perspective-jordan>