

Responding to the COVID crisis in India

The current situation in India is sobering: A new Indian mutation, mass gatherings across the country, and relatively low vaccination rates ([WHO](#)) have combined to see daily transmissions rise from 25,000 to 360,000 in just 6 weeks. The health system is overwhelmed. 3,500 people are dying each day. And the trend is up.

Grasping the scale of these numbers makes this crisis a concern to all of us. Whether we live in India, employ a workforce there, or simply feel the human connection of watching a tragedy unfold.

India is home to WBCSD member companies and to millions of their employees who are affected directly. We have heard from a number of our members and partners in India in the past days. In the eye of this tragedy, appalled by the terrible human cost, we are inspired by the stories of citizens taking care for each other, and the leadership of business in responding quickly to meet the most acute needs.

Companies have mobilized fast. And, if your business has not yet, there is much still that you can do.

Immediate challenges

There is an ongoing humanitarian crisis, with people unable to get the oxygen, care or medicine they need. Priorities in order:

1. Shortages in oxygen equipment: generators, concentrators, containers (by far the most acute)
2. Shortages in health service access - beds, monitors, rooms, health professionals (by far the second most acute)
3. Shortages in ventilators, vaccines, medicines, including Remdesvir

Further risks

Without urgent action, the health crisis could cause breakdown in essential services beyond the health system.

- Companies in or connected to mobility services report challenges with labor availability. This is because of illness among drivers.
- Companies in the food system report that [lessons have been learned from a policy perspective](#) in keeping the food chain working. However, there is risk that a health crisis could spill from urban to rural areas, with potentially grave consequences for life and for food security.

Corporate responses

As well as working to protect their own employees, this is what companies are doing to address the wider health crisis:

- Producing medical oxygen at scale: e.g. [Tata Steel](#) and [UPL](#)
- Procuring international supplies of oxygen generators, compressors and containers – e.g. [ITC](#) and [the Tatas](#)
- Providing air freight for logistics, e.g. [Vistara](#)
- Working with state and municipal governments to build and supply wards e.g. [ITC](#) and [Godrej](#)
- Using advertising and social media to promote health messages: e.g. [Aditya Birla Group](#)

An emerging list of current corporate responses to India's 2nd wave is [here](#).

How your business can help

If you are not already mobilizing your capabilities to help avert further loss, we hope the above examples can help illustrate what you could do.

- If you want to promote coordination between private sector and government in supply and distribution of oxygen and contribute towards other medical equipment , contact Seema Arora seema.arora@cii.in at our partner the Confederation of Indian Industry
- If you are in the US and want to help with provision of equipment, consider joining efforts with the [USIBC taskforce](#) and [USISPF taskforce](#)
- If you want to help fund effective organizations consider [UNICEF](#) – which has an India specific campaign for equipment, and [Swasth](#) - an Indian start up building infrastructure for producing oxygen and placing it with smaller hospitals/rural health centers.

Over the last 12 months, WBCSD and our members have developed a set of resources for business in our [COVID Response Program](#).

If you have other suggestions for how you can support India's recovery, or WBCSD can support your efforts, please let me know.

Thank you for your attention

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