### Highlights

- As of 10 April 2020:
  - Total of 35 cases confirmed: 32 imported, 3 locally transmitted;
  - 29 cases under treatment (including a 10-year-old boy), 5 recovered, 1 death (5 April);
  - Out of 1,138 people in quarantine or self-isolation, 1,115 tested negative;
  - 71 suspected cases;
  - 969 contacts under follow-up;
- Government measures in place: closure of religious, cultural sites and events; “Cordon Sanitaire” created around Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi, Allada, Ouidah, Sémé-Podji, Porto-Novo, So-Ava, Agouégué, Akpro-Misséré and Adjara and travel in/out of the “Cordon Sanitaire” prohibited from 30 March to 13 April; School closures extended to 10 May 2020; mandatory 14-day isolation for all inbound travelers in selected hotels; face masks compulsory within the “Cordon Sanitaire” and recommended in other regions.

### Situation Overview and Needs

Following the confirmation of the first positive case of COVID-19 in Benin, UNICEF Benin has been working closely with the Government and its partners to step up the response and prevent further proliferation of the COVID-19 virus in the country. UNICEF Benin is providing support to the Government, and particularly the Ministry of Health, in the field of risk communication, WASH, infection prevention and control and healthcare provision. The Country Office is also assisting national authorities in developing preparatory and prevention measures to ensure access to continuous education and child protection services.

The Government of Benin has prepared a COVID-19 response plan for US$320,338,983. The national plan focuses on the improvement of health infrastructures and equipment, communication, provision of healthcare and capacity-building for health professionals, journalists and community members. US$3.7 million of this plan is funded by the World Bank-funded REDISSE programme.

Coordination and Partnerships

UNICEF Benin is coordinating its response through three mechanisms:

- The National Committee for Health Emergencies, led by the Ministry of Health, and tasked with overall coordination and response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the national level. UNICEF is a member of the Committee’s five sub-committees including: coordination; epidemiological surveillance and data management; medical care, infection prevention and control; risk communication and community engagement; logistics and resource mobilizations;
- UN Benin COVID-19 taskforce, led by the World Health Organization Country Representative a.i. with UNICEF Representative as co-lead, and comprising all UN agencies present in Benin including UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS, WFP and FAO. UNICEF leads the RCCE taskforce.
- As the lead of the Technical and Financial Partners education group, UNICEF Benin coordinates a COVID-19 technical group supporting ministries of education in the area of prevention, sensitization and continuity of learning.

Summary Analysis of Preparedness and Response Actions

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Provided technical support to Ministry of Health to develop its RCCE Plan;
- Provided the Ministry of Health with an information guide on COVID-19 addressed to media professionals, health workers, parents and teachers on prevention measures. The guide will be used to train rapid intervention teams in the country’s 12 departments;
- Launched a children and youth competition on the best sensitization video via Twitter and Facebook;
- Coordinating and mobilizing partners to support innovative solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic through the “Innov COVID-19 taskforce”, led by Seme City (Benin Government Development Agency) in collaboration with UNFPA, and the “HackCovid19 Benin challenge” to accelerate solutions developed by young innovators and startups;
- Supported national authorities in producing and disseminating sensitization posters, flyers and TV and radio spots across the country;
- Contributed to the production of key sensitization messages for religious leaders, schools and the wider public;

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and WASH

- Construction of a morgue of the main treatment center set up for COVID-19;
- Provided WASH technical guidance in the set-up of the treatment center;
- Provided the treatment center for epidemic disease in Parakou and a selected number of health centers with protection equipment (gloves, masks, etc.);
- US$ 100,000 EPF grant received as part of the Emergency Programme Fund for the COVID-19 response.

Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services

- Elaboration of nutrition guidance in the COVID-19 context;
- Order of nutrition supplies (F75/100, RUTF, systematic medicine).

Access to Continuous Education and Child Protection Services

**Education:**

- Advocacy with education ministries leading to the set-up of a COVID-19 response Committee comprising key education actors;
- High-level meeting held between Technical and Financial education Partners under the leadership of UNICEF to assess progress made by CODI education technical group, identify areas where support will be allocated and ensure continuity of education through distance learning (including school radio programmes);
- Identification of urgent actions to be put in place in pre-school and primary schools and to be integrated into the education ministries’ response plans. The Ministry of Secondary and Technical Education and Vocational Training shared its response plan with the Technical and Financial education Partners;
- US$ 70,000 grant received from UNICEF Headquarters as a contribution from the Global Partnership for Education to support the continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Successful advocacy with ministries of education to extend school closures after Easter holidays due to the pandemic (government decision to extend school holidays until 10 May 2020);
- Coordinated efforts between Technical and Financial Partners, ministries of education and media outlets to ensure continuity of learning including through TV, radio and digital platforms, with a focus on pre-school, primary and secondary education.

**Child Protection:**
- Supported the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance to develop its COVID-19 response plan, including on child protection, which will be integrated into the national COVID-19 response plan;
- Contributed to discussions with Technical and Financial Partners to define priority areas for support to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance, based on its COVID-19 response plan;
- Advocacy with national authorities to ensure social assistants are trained and mobilized to provide information and psychosocial support to children and vulnerable people and ensure monitoring and surveillance in communities;
- Visit by the Minister of Social Affairs and Microfinance with UNICEF Representative in Benin to meet with quarantined children (8 ten-year-old girls, 1 five-year-old boy, 1 two-year old boy, and 1 male infant) and ensure necessary support, including psychosocial, is provided. Recommendations identified to provide additional support for quarantined children and their families (games, nutrition kits, books, educational support, etc.);
- Annual work plan revised in consultation with partners to identify activities and budget to be reprogrammed to support the COVID-19 national response plan;

Social Protection and cash-based assistance
- Discussions held with Government and partners on the potential socio-economic impacts of COVID 19 on families, children and vulnerable groups including informal workers;
- Participation in the Early Recovery cluster led by UNDP;
- Analysis of socio-economic impacts of COVID19 and possible recommendations for the response plan developed;
- Mapping of potential implementing partners for a humanitarian cash transfer scheme to affected population in case of imposed confinement and loss of wages.

Supply and Logistics

To support supply requests in WASH, health and communication, UNICEF Benin has supported the Government in procurement of the following:
- 3 vehicles provided to the Ministry of Health for rapid response teams in 3 departments;
- Printing of 60,000 A2 format posters, 500,000 flyers and 300 large-size (4mx3m) posters to sensitize the public;
- Production of 3 TV/radio spots.

Human Resources

The following needs in human resources were shared with the Regional Office to support the UNICEF Benin’s response capacity:
- 1 Expert in digitalization of school programmes for educational radio
- 1 Health specialist
- 1 WASH specialist
- 1 Supply specialist
- Senior C4D Specialist

Funding Overview

On the basis of the national plan and its assessment of priority needs, UNICEF Benin submitted a COVID-19 response proposal to its Regional Office and EMOPS amounting to US$ 13.3 million:
UNICEF Benin is mobilizing its « friends of children » journalists network and leveraging its social media platforms to share prevention messages. UNICEF global press releases are shared with local media outlets on a regular basis. The Country Office posted 40 prevention messages on social media platforms, reaching 65,000 people online. Specific focus was put on WASH best practices, tips for parents and awareness raising on the disinformation. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Health in developing a guidebook for media professionals on COVID-19 and training 50 journalists on reporting on the new coronavirus pandemic.

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