Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

As of 23 April, there are a total of 52 confirmed cases of COVID-19 recorded in Guinea-Bissau, from which 35 are male (62%) and 17 are female (38%). Most confirmed cases are in the capital, Bissau, but there are also cases in Cacheu and Biombo regions. The most attained age group is between 25 and 34 years and constitutes 39% of the cases. 80% of contacts of confirmed cases have been visited daily since the 28 March 2020 to date.

The National Health Emergency Committee, under the Ministry of Health, continues to lead the response, supported by the UN system and other partners like Médecins Sans Frontieres. The Committee holds daily coordination meetings, as well as daily briefings to the press and the general public about the outbreak. In support of the National Contingency Plan, the UN has developed a UN joint COVID-19 Operational Support Plan. In the context of the support plan, UNICEF leads the UN interagency Task Force on risk communication and community engagement in support of the response and in close coordination with the National Health Emergency Committee.

The national authorities have declared the State of Emergency, to prevent the spread of the disease, closing schools, restaurants and bars, prohibiting gatherings and establishing a period from 7h to 12h each day to sell and buy goods in the markets.

UNICEF’s COVID-19 response

In support to the National Contingency Plan for COVID-19, UNICEF response strategy and interventions focus on the following:

- Risk communication and community engagement and C4D
- WASH and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures;
- Health — Continuous access to health services, capacity strengthening of medical personnel and provision of medical consumables, essential drugs and equipment;
- Education: provision of distance education and support to education sector response and recovery
- Child Protection: Psychosocial support and continuous access to child protection services;
- Procurement and logistics

Health

UNICEF works with the Ministry of Health to ensure continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women, children and vulnerable communities, including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care, HIV care and nutritional services. Community Health Workers from the regions of Gabu, Quinara and Bolama/Bijagos have been trained to build their capacity in the sensitization of families about precautionary measures and identification of signs of the infection. The community health workers will help with case identification as they are present in all regions of the country. Planning is in progress for the training of 10 public health laboratory technicians on early childhood diagnosis and Covid-19 through REAL TIME PCR. The proposal for the distribution of antiretroviral drugs to PLHIV in the context of COVID-19 is underway through RENAP+ GB. In addition, a partnership agreement is being prepared with this NGO for recovery of PLHIV who lost to follow up on ART including COVID-19 awareness.

WASH

76 communities, out of 960 targeted, have been equipped with handwashing devices and soap and informed on prevention measures to prevent COVID-19, benefitting around 10,000 people. A monitoring dashboard for the interventions has been created and can be seen through this link https://bit.ly/GNB_covid19_unicef_WASH

RCCE/C4D

At the national level, UNICEF is supporting the National Health Emergency Committee in developing and disseminating COVID-19 messaging, communication material, such as posters and flyers, as well as multimedia content, such as TV and radio spots both in Portuguese and in over 12 local languages, across the country. In this framework, UNICEF is building on its partnership with national TV, national newspaper and 29 national and community radios. The volunteers from the National Red Cross continued the door-to-door sensitization campaign for coronavirus prevention and
mitigation in the capital Bissau, 9,452 people have been reached during the reporting period, amounting to a cumulative total of 37,959 people reached, from the 47,250 people targeted. 760 traditional and religious leaders and traditional healers have been mobilized to sensitize their communities about the prevention of COVID-19. Social media posts on COVID-19 have reached 178,597 people.

**Education**

Since April 11, UNICEF is partnering with the National television to broadcast programmes on early learning for young children, parents, and caregivers three times each day (21 radio lessons and 21 TV lessons). In addition, UNICEF as coordinating agency for the sector, is supporting the Ministry of Education in the preparation of proposal for the GPE accelerated financing for COVID-19.

**Child protection**

UNICEF is supporting COVID-19 community awareness activities in 109 communities in the regions of Gabu, Tombali, Oio, Cacheu, Quinara and Autonomous Sector of Bissau, targeting 12,000 people directly, including 3,500 children and adolescents. In addition, 75 community workers and regional coordinators from 5 NGOs, implementing community programmes to end FGM and child marriage, are being provided with hygiene supplies and correct information on COVID-19, including mechanism and approaches to address it at community level. During the current reporting period, training of 66 social workers, psychologists and CSOs on the Covid Response took place, with a focus on the protection of children and psychological support (23rd). UNICEF and partners are working on the review of working tools and coordination networks between professionals to ensure the child protection system is strengthened during the COVID-19 response.

**Supplies**

UNICEF has placed the order for medical equipment and supplies for the isolation ward located in the National Hospital Simao Mendes. An initial delivery of medical supplies has been handed over to the Hospital while the rest of the order is received. In addition, 20,000 hand-made masks are being purchased for distribution among the population. UNICEF has procured 10 oxygen concentrators, waiting for arrival in Bissau.

Pictures of some of UNICEF interventions including: reorganization of the new market with the objective to ensure that customers respect social distance measures, distribution of posters and leaflets to traditional and religious leaders during advocacy activities, dissemination of TV spots, door-to-door sensitization campaign through volunteers in Bissau and distribution of handwashing stations and soap in 960 rural communities.
Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

UNICEF development programmes have been adapted to the COVID-19 context by reformulating some activities, by using programme resources to enhance COVID-19 interventions or by adding sensitization on COVID-19 prevention to our current programmes.

- Community health programme: Community Health Workers are receiving additional training on COVID-19 prevention so that they can add COVID-19 prevention to the 16 Key Family Practices that they promote and support in the identification of suspect cases.

- Adolescent girl’s empowerment programme: that is implemented in the regions of Gabu and Bafata, is also adapting its interventions by focusing life skills training on the prevention of COVID-19 in their communities and by organizing the communication training and production of communication materials on COVID-19.

- Ensuring continuous access to vaccination: to ensure continuity of access to vaccination services and to avoid stockout during the pandemic period where the borders are closed and flights cancelled, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Health on shipment of vaccines through the Logistic services from the regional office. Also, to maintain the continuity of service delivery, UNICEF technically supports MoH to prepare a proposal for the vaccines support renewal and the proposal for introduction of new vaccines (Men-A and MCV-2).

- Nutrition: UNICEF is supporting the adaptation of processes and protocols for integrated management of acute malnutrition during the COVID-19 period.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

The Guinea-Bissau CO has contributed to the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan with a request of USD 2.27 million for preparedness and response needs. UNICEF Guinea-Bissau has redirected $US 200,000 of its own resources to the response. The office also received US$ 70,000 provided by the Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) from GPE, US$ 67,000 from GAVI and US$ 100,000 from the Regional Office Emergency Fund.

Current resource mobilization efforts include the preparation of funding proposals for COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF (US$ 1,000,000), to the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding window (up to US$ 5,000,000) and to reallocation of GAVI Health System Strengthening funds (up to US$ 300,000).

External Media

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and www.unicef.org/guineabissau

For more information contact:

Nadine Perrault
Representative
UNICEF Guinea-Bissau
Email: aperrault@unicef.org

Ainhoa Jaureguibetitia
Deputy Representative
UNICEF Guinea-Bissau
Email:ajaureguibetitia@unicef.org