Highlights

- The number of new COVID-19 cases in Malawi continues to increase steadily with 417 new cases recorded since 22 June representing a 49 per cent increase.

- School re-opening guidelines were launched on 24 June 2020 by the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19. The taskforce’s proposed date of reopening of schools is 13 of July 2020. However, a review will be made in two weeks’ time before the actual opening in view of the increasing number of cases being experienced in the country.

- With UNICEF support, psychological first aid was provided to 43 returnees from South Africa at Machinga Teachers Training College returnee holding centre.

- As of 24 June, mQuarantine (a UNICEF supported COVID-19 quarantine management solution) has 3,784 unique and active users, allowing persons under quarantine and suspicion to report their symptoms to health workers via SMS technology in (near-to) real-time.

- With a new government now in place following the presidential elections that took place on 23 June, there is a possibility of changes in the Presidential Task Force membership and mode of operation. UNICEF, in close collaboration with the UNCT, is preparing for high level advocacy with the incoming leadership, including cabinet members.
Situation overview

As of 29 June 2020, 1,224 cases have been confirmed representing an increase of 44 per cent since 22 June. Of the 1,224 cases, 636 are imported infections, 551 are locally transmitted while 37 are still under investigation. Cumulatively, 260 cases have now recovered bringing the total number of active cases to 950. As of 29 June, some 260 people had recovered while 14 deaths had been recorded.

Recently, Malawi has been receiving returnees and deportees from other countries, mainly South Africa. During the reporting period, an additional 729 (312 females and 417 males) travellers entered the country. Upon entry, they are tested for COVID-19, if positive they are put under institutional isolation until safe transfer to their destination district has been arranged. Those tested negative proceed to their destination for self-quarantine and follow up by respective district health authorities. Screening of all returnees at the points of entry such as Mwanza, Kamuzu International Airport and Songwe for temperature and other symptoms is ongoing after which the returnees are moved to a holding centre for the collection of samples and testing. UNICEF continues to support the returnees through provision of clean water, sanitation facilities, personnel protective equipment and screening including provision of overnight allowances to laboratory staff as well as transportation of samples.

Testing capacity continues to expand, and laboratory tests have been carried out on 13,918 samples at 43 laboratories (14 RT-PCR and 29 GeneXpert). Two additional testing centres that are using GeneXpert technology were added during the reporting period.

Programme response by UNICEF and partners

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF Malawi is working in the following areas of strategic priority against COVID-19:

- Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality
- Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services
- Assessing and responding to the immediate secondary impacts of COVID-19
- Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

UNICEF maintains critical preparedness and response operations, including operational humanitarian access corridors, and delivery of services in Health, Education, Child and Social Protection, WASH, Nutrition and Communication for Development (C4D) areas to prevent and control infections, ensure continuity of education, promote positive behaviours, preventing transmission and ensuring the protection of children rights, especially of the most vulnerable one.
Humanitarian leadership and coordination

Government coordination mechanisms

- A rapid response team is in place under the Presidential COVID-19 Taskforce to oversee the reception of returnees and deportees from South Africa. The Presidential Task Force continues to engage in weekly meetings to coordinate measures to respond to the pandemic.
- With a new government now in place following the presidential elections that took place on 23 June, there is a possibility of changes in the Presidential Task Force membership and mode of operation.
- The government continues to conduct press briefings aimed at providing clear information on the outbreak.
- As per the national preparedness and response plans, several clusters remain "activated" at the national level for the response, of which UNICEF is co-leading four of the clusters (WASH, Nutrition, Education and Protection). All the clusters are meeting and are closely monitoring the situation in addition to updating the National Plan while at the same time supporting the implementation of preparedness and response actions. (https://calendar.google.com/).
- The National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee continues to meet weekly to review recommendations from the cluster system. Since the membership of the committee is mostly Principal Secretaries of government ministries, there is a possibility of changes in the representation also as a result of the change in government.

UN coordination mechanisms

- Humanitarian Country Team and the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group were postponed to next week due to the election.
- Clusters continue to hold weekly meetings for better response coordination.
- The first COVID-19 WFP Aviation humanitarian flight for Malawi took place on Tuesday, June 16.

Malawi COVID-19 Supply Chain system

- The Supply Portal, managed by UNICEF, continues to facilitate requests by national authorities and humanitarian partners for strategic and critical supplies.
- UNICEF continues to participate in the Logistics cluster under the leadership of the Ministry of Transport and WFP and the Health medical supplies committee. UNICEF is a key member of the cluster given its procurement services function and its role in the coordination of the supply chain portal requests in Malawi.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Strengthening public health response to improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

UNICEF continues to support key interventions in COVID-19 surveillance and coordination with funding from UK Aid. During the reporting period, through Malawi Red Cross (MRCS) Society, 729 travellers were screened (312 females and 417 males) at the Mwanza and Karonga/Songwe points of entry. As of 28 June, a cumulative total of 20,725 (5,639 Female and 15,086 Male) have been screened. Surveillance teams from districts and MRCS volunteers are following up 1,912 returnees in line with the Ministry of Health case/contact 14 days monitoring protocol.

UNICEF also continues to provide critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services at emergency treatment units, border points and at community-level. Water being very critical for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), UNICEF is supporting water quality testing to ensure access to safe water.
Water Services Association of Malawi (WASAMA) with UNICEF support, has started undertaking water quality audits of the five water boards, to ensure they supply good quality water and reduce COVID-19 risk as part of water safety planning. This is in addition to water quality tests that are being conducted at hospitals and areas surrounding emergency treatment units within a radius of 1 kilometre. These tests have so far been conducted on a total of 39 water sources with capacity to serve a population of 11,000 people. Out of the 39 tests conducted, seven test results showed bacterial contamination were all treated (flush chlorinated) and are now providing safe drinking water.

To augment the government’s electronic infectious disease surveillance and response (e-IDSR) solution, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Population (MoH) to develop the COVID-19 quarantine management solution or mQuarantine. As of 24 June, mQuarantine has 3,784 unique and active users, allowing persons under quarantine and suspicion to report in (near-to) real-time their symptoms to health workers via SMS technology.

To actively find innovative ways to fight COVID-19, UNICEF is supporting a COVID-19 Youth Challenge which went live on 3 June 2020. The challenge involves young people aged 14 to 35. By 29 June, a total of 5,615 young people has participated in the COVID-19 challenge. Majority of the young participants are from central region, 60 per cent are male, and 41 per cent are aged 18 to 24 years old. The top 10 solutions will be incubated for three months by the Social Impact Incubator-Malawi, and the top five winning ideas will receive US$ 2,000 each.

**Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**

UNICEF with funding from UKaid through Malawi Institute Journalism (MIJ), Story Workshop and Development Communications Trust (DCT) continues to support implementation of risk communication and community engagement interventions using various delivery platforms.

Through partnership with Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ), which is using three National Radios, TVs and 12 community radios, a total of 2,828 radio slots and 152 TV slots have so far been broadcast. During the reporting period out of 1,626 people interviewed, 1,535 (about 94 per cent) were able to recall the messages they heard through the radio broadcasts on issues of COVID-19. This reflects an increase of close to 8 per cent in the public knowledge for COVID-19.

Furthermore, about 240,000 people have been reached with COVID-19 messages through door to door, mobile van and community drama sessions while an additional (more than 165,000) people have been reached through the social media pages. UNICEF is working with the partners on a rumour tracking tool as it has been established that there are a lot of rumours in circulation which calls for more community engagement sessions to clarify these rumours. UNICEF will further be working with the partners to reprogram some of the mobile activities to more community engagement activities. Mobile phones have also been given to the implementing partners to assist in the information gathering for the COVID-19 response.

**Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services**

With UNICEF’s support, school re-opening guidelines were launched on 24 June 2020 by the Presidential Taskforce on COVID 19. The Taskforce proposed and cautiously endorsed 13 July for the reopening of schools. A review will be made in two weeks’ time before the actual opening in view of the increasing number of cases being experienced in the country. The school re-opening guidelines proposed a phased re-opening guided by the Ministry of Health and preventive measures for COVID-19 to be enforced. The taskforce is optimistic that it is possible to achieve safe return to school with strict adherence of guidelines and enforcement of measures.
UNICEF continues to support YONECO (Youth Net and Counselling) in the provision of basic Psychological First Aid (PFA) to callers as well as advice, referrals and follow-ups in cases of child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). During the reporting period, most calls to the Gender Based Violence (GBV) Crisis Line and Child Helpline were directly related to COVID-19. Among other things, callers sought information on the status of the pandemic, school re-opening and negative consequences of COVID-19 including children involved in child labour. YONECO District offices in 14 districts also supported walk-in clients by providing psychosocial support and referrals.

Support in the provision of community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and child protection services using a case management approach also continues. From 22 to 26 June, in Machinga and Blantyre districts, the respective District Social Welfare Officers (DSWO) reached 48 children (25 girls, 23 boys), 378 parents (144 females 234 males), and 56 caregivers (26 females 30 males) with community based MHPSS. Blantyre DSWO followed up with six children (4 girls, 2 boys) who were reintegrated from Child Care Institutions to their families. In Machinga district on 20 June, 15 MHPSS providers (5 females, 10 males) were trained on Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for management, care, and support of returnees.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) was provided to 43 returnees (50 females, 93 males) from South Africa at Machinga Teachers Training College returnee holding centre. In addition, 90 people, including the returnees who were found to be COVID-19 positive and their close relatives, were provided with remote PFA from 21 to 24 June.

With UNICEF technical support, the Government finalized guidance for Social Workers during COVID-19, which sets out how social workers and para-professionals can support specific vulnerable groups of people effectively, including children in child care institutions, children on the street, children in the conflict with the law, people with disability and chronically ill, elderly, young women and adolescents, as well as the returnees.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

The weekly radio programmes continue to be broadcast on Zodiak Broadcasting Station (92.7fm) every Tuesday at 6.30 PM and the next day at 3:30 PM. UNICEF has partnered with the Zodiak to produce a series of radio, TV and online programmes and news features on COVID-19 awareness, impact and prevention. During the reporting period, the focus was on education. Three students (technical college, secondary and primary school) were interviewed on how school closures are affecting them. Zodiak also interviewed the Director of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education on the prospects of reopening, and what measures the Ministry wants in place to ensure students and teachers return to a safe environment. In the Q&A session, they announced names of those who answered previous week’s questions on symptoms of COVID-19 correctly (to encourage community engagement and at the same increase awareness). This episode’s question was how to prevent COVID-19. Listeners are asked to SMS their response, or any other comments or questions.

Through its partnership with the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ), UNICEF is supporting journalism students to produce COVID-19 programmes which are now being broadcast on MIJ national radio station and four community radio stations. Through this exercise, the young journalists are building their capacity to produce content on children’s issues (more specifically on how COVID-19 is affecting children and young people), amplifying children’s voices and raising awareness about COVID-19 and its impact.

UNICEF continues to produce stories, multimedia contents, infographics, engage with celebrities and influencers to promote Covid-19 messaging, countering myths and misinformation, and documenting our response in the field. A new story titled “Chief Kawinga leads in COVID-19 fight in Malawi” talks about traditional leaders and their role in COVID19 awareness has been posted on our website.
UNICEF continues to use various digital platforms like the U-Report to extensively reach 221,516 u-reporters in Malawi with messaging on COVID-19 through SMS, polling, open-end questions, quiz, information bots, social media, etc. The U-Report chatbot with information on COVID-19 from UNICEF, WHO and MOH is still live, and to date has registered 503,215 responses.

U-Report sent out a poll on norms concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights to 32,476 u-reporters in six districts under the Spotlight Initiative. U-Report has also been supporting the UNICEF Covid19 Youth Challenge powered by the Segal Family Foundation & the Social Impact Incubator Malawi through promotional messages. 8,117 U-Reporters have so far visited the challenge page through U-Report. UNICEF continues to collect personal experiences from U-Reporters on how their communities have been fighting COVID-19. The stories are published on U-Report Malawi and UNICEF websites and social media sites.

On social media, we continue to share messages on COVID-19 prevention and awareness, including new content on misinformation, physical distancing and the wearing of masks. UNICEF regularly updates its dedicated COVID-19 page on its website with latest news and information on UNICEF and its partners' response to COVID-19 in Malawi.

Next SitRep: 8 July 2020


Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Total results as of 1 July 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with PPEs</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>3,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>198,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>3,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of caregivers of children aged 0-23 months reached with messages aiming to promote breastfeeding in the context of COVID through national communication campaigns</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>306,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)&quot;</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>5,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning</td>
<td>2,139,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Protection</strong></td>
<td>Number of households benefitting from new or additional social assistance</td>
<td>457,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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