Virtual connections are transforming youth and childcare across South Africa, keeping children and young people in touch with their mentors.

**Highlights**

- The UNICEF supported ‘Childline’ received 11,355 calls, a 25% increase from the previous two weeks. Critical support and advice were provided to callers who reflected increasing protection issues for children as South Africa’s lockdown eased slightly.

- UNICEF is supporting the analysis of national, provincial and district health data to quantify the impact of the pandemic on access to antenatal and postnatal care, HIV testing for infants, access to ARVs and vaccination coverage. This will help to tailor programming according to the gaps and challenges in the weeks to come.

- New data from the Western Cape Health Department showed the COVID-19 mortality rate for people living with HIV and TB to be two to three times higher. This was lower than expected when compared to the risks associated with other health conditions, such as diabetes.

**Situation Overview**

- South Africa has the highest number of cases in Africa at 73,533, with total number of deaths now at 1,568, a mortality rate of 2.2%.

- The country moved to level 3 of lockdown, but COVID-19 cases continued to rise and on 14 June there were 4,302 new cases, a record daily jump, nearly 80% higher than any previous 1-day figure.

- Western Cape Province with 44,143 cases and 1,156 deaths accounts for more than two-thirds of the country’s cases. Gauteng now has second highest number of cases (12,193) followed by Eastern Cape (10,597) and KwaZulu Natal (3,959).

- In response to the intensity and increase of infections in the Western Cape, President Ramaphosa visited the province on 05 June to meet with the Premier, Alan Winde, and the provincial executive to assess the province’s readiness for continued management of the pandemic.

- On 04 June, Cabinet approved the extension of the National State of Disaster by another month from 15 June to 15 July 2020.

- Two days later, the North Gauteng High Court declared the COVID-19 lockdown regulations in levels 3 and 4 unconstitutional and invalid. While government appeals the court judgment, current regulations will remain in force.
- According to the National Department of Health, 2,528 healthcare workers in the public and private health sectors have been infected and 23 have died.

- The ability to provide healthcare services is being impacted by healthcare workers becoming infected, particularly in the Western Cape where health services are under pressure.

**Coordination**

- UNICEF convened a meeting with key stakeholders working on child nutrition issues. The goal is to mobilise stakeholders (academics, partners, civil society organisation, child health and nutrition experts) to support the National Department of Health in developing and implementing the response plan to a potential surge in acute malnutrition. UNICEF is coordinating efforts to ensure that child nutrition services continue under the current lockdown and through into a post-COVID-19 reality.

- UNICEF successfully advocated for the reinstatement of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) quarterly meeting. This followed information analysis conducted by UNICEF which found that the new PMTCT guidelines are not being implemented – particularly viral load monitoring for mothers during delivery.

- UNICEF is supporting the Department of Social Development in its activities and campaign for the ‘365 day a year of child protection activities’ and coordinates the response to COVID-19 in the Protection Working Group with key partners from government, the UN and civil society.

**Summary of Preparedness and Response Actions**

**Education**

1. Schools were meant to re-open on 01 June with the exit Grades 7 (primary) and 12 (secondary) returning in a phased approach. However, there was pushback due to the perceived lack of readiness in most provinces and reopening was moved by a week to 08 June. This period coincided with a significant spike in reported COVID-19 cases and up to 70 schools have since had to close in different parts of the country because of COVID-19 cases involving either an educator or a student. Data on actual numbers of children reporting back to school is still being monitored. Private schools with 125 students or below can operate at full capacity from the third week of June.

2. UNICEF supported the development of child-friendly key messages on COVID-19 and prevention measures, which will be printed by the Department of Education (DBE) for distribution to schools. These messages – based on the core protocols and guidelines developed by the DBE – have been shared via social media.

3. UNICEF developed Back to School Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which were shared with the DBE and are to be finalized and distributed.

4. Technical assistance, to be embedded in the DBE / National Education Collaboration Trust, is nearly concluded with interviews of candidates expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

5. Educational TV and radio broadcasts will run through to 30 September and discussions with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) are ongoing to reschedule some broadcasts to better timeslots for students. Broadcasts for the Foundation Phase (Gr. R – 3) remain accessible on the 2Enable online platform and app. Radio broadcasts have reached an estimated 4.1 million children across the country.

6. The *Active Learning@Home* series continues to be shared through social media platforms and feedback received shows that it has received widespread acceptance. The series started as a partnership between the DBE, UNICEF SA and the LEGO Foundation and now also includes the NGO, MIET Africa, who will distribute throughout their networks. Estimates are that these broadcasts have reached at least 1.3 million homes.

7. The *Tshwagarano Ka Bana* series continues to reach more parents to support their children’s learning, with the DBE platform helping to widen the programme’s reach significantly, as it’s parents’ first point of contact. Complemented with support from the British Council through the 2Enable platform, the series – under the theme ‘let’s play, learn and grow together’ – has now been accessed by over 600,000 parents of young children.

8. Work with the Children’s Radio Foundation (CRF) on COVID-19 continues to 30 June and given its critical role in reaching some of the most vulnerable households, the programme will be renewed subject to funding. The broadcasts have reached 1.5 million households.
9. The GBEM Facebook Live series with young people continued where we had a live chat about multidimensional poverty and young people which was titled Children: The hidden victims of the pandemic

10. Working with the Sport for Social Change Network, we continued to disseminate the Toolkit to Spread Awareness and Take Action on COVID-19 to NGO’s in South Africa and across the region.

11. UNICEF is working with a S4D partner to digitize a COVID-19 response S4D evidence-based curriculum to help stop community spread of the virus. Once digitized, this curriculum will be offered as an e-learning course for coaches, facilitators, parents, educators and learners

**Child and Social Protection**

1. Despite the ongoing commitment and accelerated actions by government and partners to combat gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC), there have been increased reports of rape and the killing of women during Level 3 of lockdown. The UN has called for accelerated investments in prevention and early intervention services, community dialogues and access to justice for victims.

2. UNICEF provided key technical and leadership support in the organisation of Child Protection Week under this year’s theme: “Protecting all Children during COVID-19 and Beyond.” Attracting millions of viewers, UNICEF organised a national televised webinar on online safety with the Department of Social Development and other key partners from government, corporates and civil society organisations. UNICEF participated in a webinar on online safety with the Film and Publications Board and gave a keynote on children’s rights in the digital space. Lastly, the Deputy Representative accompanied the Minister of Social Development in her monitoring visit to children in institutions in Gauteng.

3. Response to migrant communities and children on the move:
   - UNICEF and partners continued community-based mental health and psychosocial support for refugees and asylum seekers, reaching 120 children (70 girls and 50 boys), as well as 69 adults (31 men and 38 women) with one-on-one counselling in various shelters and migrants’ facilities. Migrants living in shelters expressed the desire to be reintegrated into the community however many have lost contact with families and friends. UNICEF and partners are supporting with family reunification and reintegration work.
   - COVID-19 risk education and gender-based violence awareness activities continued in migrant communities, with 250 migrants participating in Kwa-Zulu Natal province.

4. Calls to the Childline increased 25% over the last two weeks, reaching 11,355 calls. Children reported being worried about high levels of physical and emotional abuse, with new complaints relating to parent’s substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) at home. Children are also anxious about hunger, returning to school and a loss of livelihoods – all of which are compounded by safety concerns.

5. UNICEF signed a partnership with the South African Council for Social Services Professionals (SACSSP) to strengthen the capacity of 3,000 social service professionals in response to COVID-19. This includes in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), competencies on online service provision and community based mental health and psychosocial support. These new partnerships have been made possible due to an increase in COVID-related funding.

6. UNICEF is concluding an MoU with VIACOM after the success of the all Africa Benefit concert. The MoU will take the partnership forward over two years. It will amplify the voices of children on the VIACOM BET and MTV platforms, accelerate investment in safe spaces and lead to the mentoring of 40 youth by VIACOM management.

**Health and Nutrition**

1. To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential child health services and given their acute vulnerability in the COVID-19 pandemic, the right to health care services was prioritised and upheld in the COVID-19 response plans.

2. The Gauteng Department of Health reported that almost 11,000 HIV-positive patients have skipped their ARV collections since the start of the lockdown on 27 March 2020. Patients who are unable to keep their treatment going are vulnerable and may be susceptible to other infections.

3. Preliminary data to assess the impact of the pandemic on vaccination rates shows a decrease of 20-30% of Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus (DPT3) coverage in April, compared with earlier months in 2020. The decline in routine vaccination rates increase the risks of outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Parental concerns about potential exposure to COVID-19 during visits to health facilities may be contributing to the decline.
4. UNICEF is working to increase demand for vaccinations by supporting the National Department of Health on an integrated Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition campaign to remind and mobilise parents and caregivers of the vital need to protect their children against vaccine-preventable diseases – even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. On the supply side, UNICEF is coordinating efforts between National and Provincial level health departments to plan a rapid catch-up vaccination drive as soon as possible.

5. Data analysis of UNICEF’s mothers2mothers peer mentor supported project shows that from March to April 2020 there was a 43% decrease in antenatal care enrolments and a 19.6% decrease in postnatal care enrolments. Peer mentors have been equipped with phone data to provide one-to-one and WhatsApp group virtual support to mentor clients.

6. UNICEF supported the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province in the review of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programmes to assess progress towards achievement of the ‘last mile plan.’ Districts presented their data, identified gaps (such as viral load monitoring during pregnancy and delivery and districts PCR positivity) and reported on plans to address the gaps.

WASH

1. UNICEF is conducting an assessment amongst community leaders in rural and informal settlements to gather water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) related data to further inform and strategise interventions. The assessment is ongoing and to date has 146 submissions from across South Africa.

2. Through the UNICEF volunteer network, a WASH needs assessment is also ongoing to receive valuable information on the impact of COVID-19 on communities and the current water, sanitation and hygiene needs.

3. The installation of handwashing with soap stations has continued in vulnerable communities. Four stations were erected at health care facilities and one station at a community centre in Hammanskraal, as well as two new units in Alexandra Township. Plans are underway for the installations of similar stations in North West Province, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Communication, Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

Communication

1. An online photo essay depicted UNICEF South Africa’s support of the “Isibindi Ezikoleni” project with the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). The programme provides online learning, psychosocial services and educational support to children and youth in what the NACCW calls their ‘virtual lifespace.’

2. To commemorate Child Protection Week 2020 (31 May- 7 June), UNICEF co-hosted and participated in a Webinar on Online Safety for children with key players in field of child protection in South Africa.

3. UNICEF South Africa, with the NGO mothers2mothers, supports a project that focuses on adolescent young mothers who are HIV-positive, who receive training to mentor other young mothers who are pregnant and breastfeeding. A photo essay documenting this support has been produced and is available on the UNICEF South Africa website.

4. A webinar on Online Safety for Children convened by UNICEF South Africa. Participants included the Deputy Minister of Communications as well as key stakeholders from Government, academia and civil society.

5. Interview on SABC television show, Raising Babies, recorded on 13 June, which focused on how children are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. Channel Africa Radio also carried a live interview during the Child Protection week.

6. Finalisation of ‘Back to Work’ communication messaging materials by the UN Communication Group COVID-19 Task Team, chaired by UNICEF.

C4D / Risk Communication and Community Engagement

1. UNICEF increased participation in Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) actions by integrating RCCE assessment questions into the WASH survey sent to:
   a. Community leaders in informal settlements and rural areas across South Africa (146 respondents)
   b. UNICEF volunteers, including whether and how they might support a tippy tap campaign (316 completed the survey)
c. U-Report (3,698 U-Reporters responded)

2. Targeted IEC material (A4 sticker) is being developed for vulnerable households on preventing COVID-19, promoting health and access to feedback mechanisms. This will be included in WASH hygiene kits.

3. UNICEF is working with U-Report, Rlabs/Zlato, and the Children’s Radio Foundation to develop a Youth Challenge and national campaign to build ‘tippy tap’ handwashing stations in all households without access to running water and improve handwashing practices. Incentives will be provided through Zlato.

4. UNICEF is engaging with the multi-sectoral platform on COVID 19 and waste management, to integrate messages, share research findings and coordinate communication interventions.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

- The pledge campaign, ‘Buckets of Care’, has raised R78,535 to date.

- A donation of sanitary pads from Woolworths, with a value USD $62,000, was delivered to the Gauteng Department of Education to be used in schools.

- My School donated R350,000 (USD $21,875) for building handwashing stations in informal settlements.

Challenges

- The reopening of schools was delayed by one week due to discussions around preparedness efforts and on the safety for children and educational staff returning. Since opening, up to 70 schools have closed due to reported COVID-19 cases. UNICEF continues to support the Department of Basic Education, including on the standard operation procedures on how to keep schools safer and how to respond following new cases.

- The easing of lockdown to Level 3 comes as COVID-19 cases continue to rise. UNICEF will need to continue adapting across its programming to provide a tailored response and to provide clear guidance, including prevention messaging.

Who to contact for further information:
Muriel Mafico
Deputy Representative
mmafico@unicef.org

Toby Fricker
Chief of Communication and Partnerships
tfricker@unicef.org
## Annex A

### Summary of Programme Results, UNICEF South Africa, as of June 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Target to 31 Dec 2020</th>
<th>Results as of 15 June 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children – and parents - supported with distance/home-based learning [ECD, Primary, Secondary Ed]</td>
<td>7,200,000</td>
<td>3,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Policy and Child Protection</strong></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>100,000</td>
<td>15,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UNICEF personnel &amp; partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation &amp; referrals for survivors, including for PSEA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs</td>
<td>13,000,000</td>
<td>13,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health, Nutrition and WASH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children &amp; women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV &amp; GBV care in UNICEF supported facilities (National and monthly)</td>
<td>Monthly: 171858 (80,252 children and 91,606 women)</td>
<td>As of June 2020: 135475 (85,047 children and 94,868 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms (through UNICEF supported Adolescent Girls and Young Women peer mentors project)</td>
<td>Monthly: 5,774</td>
<td>7,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Communication</strong></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>7,000,000</td>
<td>7,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>30,514</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>800,000</td>
<td>35,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annex B

#### Funding Status, UNICEF South Africa, June 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Requirements (US$)</th>
<th>Received (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap from HAC (HAC-Received)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>HAC</td>
<td>Regular Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and WASH</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy and Child Protection</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5,090,000</td>
<td>2,545,000</td>
<td>2,545,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis of disease and secondary impact on women and children</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>