 highlights

- UNICEF has provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to 28 districts and four central hospitals in Malawi. These are adequate to support 200 health workers for a couple of weeks.
- With UK Aid funding, UNICEF is distributing locally procured PPE supplies worth approximately US$ 314,000 to targeted districts in Malawi. The PPE include 16,800 surgical masks, 18,760 N95 masks 600,000 latex gloves, 1,000 heavy-duty gloves, and 1,500 gumboots.
- On Tuesday 21 April, the Ministry of Education launched an online learning for secondary school learners from Form 1 to Form 4. It allows secondary school learners to access lessons through the Ministry’s website, where the lessons have been uploaded. The Memorandum of Understandings signed between the Ministry of Education and telecommunication companies (both Airtel and TNM) allow learners to connect to the website at no data cost.

Situation overview

As of 28 April since the last report, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Malawi has doubled with 36 positive cases (and three deaths) in six of its districts. There has been a shift in the district with most cases with Blantyre registering 9 cases and Lilongwe now with 23 cases. On 26 April, the central region registered its first case in Karonga district. Other districts that have registered cases are Zomba, Chikwawa and Nkhotakota with one case each. Of the 36 cases, 25 are reported to have been locally transmitted while nine were imported. Two cases in Blantyre and Lilongwe have an unknown chain of transmission.

As of 24 April, a total of 7,058 high-risk travellers had entered the country and were being monitored out of which 1,540 had been discharged after completing the 14-day mandatory self-quarantine. Only three borders remain open to allow transit of essential services. Active tracing and monitoring of contacts of confirmed COVID-19 are ongoing. So far, a total of 303 contacts of COVID-19 cases have been traced out of which 97 have been tested.
Preparedness and response actions by UNICEF and partners

The Government of Malawi
- On 14 April, the Malawi Government declared a 21-day lockdown from 18 April to 9 May 2020. However, the Malawi Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) obtained a seven-day court injunction stopping the lockdown. The injunction is still in force until the court decides on the matter on 29 April 2020.
- The Government of Malawi (GoM) has deployed a joint patrol team comprising of Malawi Defense Forces, Immigration and Police to provide border security patrols including on Lake Malawi.
- On 24 April 2020, the government organized a COVID-19 press conference to provide crucial information on the outbreak and how government and partners are responding. The Press conference was addressed by the Chief of Health Services and attended by WHO Representative and Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Director among others.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs is mobilizing road traffic police to enforce new seating arrangement for public transportation as part of the measures to reduce transmission of COVID-19.

UN System
- The UN and partners continue to support the implementation of the National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. Additionally, a UN/INGO plan is currently being drafted to support the prioritization of needs identified by the Government of Malawi.
- The UN is developing a Flash Appeal for a period of six months (May-October 2020) to address immediate needs and for better humanitarian coordination, visibility and resource mobilization in Malawi.

UNICEF Support

Health
- UNICEF has provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to 28 districts and four central hospitals in Malawi. Some of the PPE supplies were originally prepositioned for the Ebola Virus Disease preparedness and response, funded by UK Aid.
- With funding from UK Aid, 390 port health and immigration officials including border police, have received training through UNICEF implementing partner Malawi Red Cross Society.
- UNICEF provided six 72 square meter tents for isolation and treatment purposes to Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Dedza, Mwanza, Mzuzu, Karonga, and Zomba. Each of the tents has room enough to hold 10 patients.
- Three consultants (coordinator, public health officer and communication specialist) recruited by UNICEF are supporting the operations of the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre located in the Public Health Institute of Malawi, Ministry of Health.

Child Protection
- UNICEF's partner, Save the Children, has conducted a rapid mapping exercise of Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs), which will provide essential services at community levels to support victims/survivors of violence, in six districts namely Machinga, Nsanje, Dowa, Ntchisi, Mzimba and Nkhatabay. So far, 34 CVSU Committees have been reconstituted, and 10 CVSU Committees (83 participants) out of the 34 have been oriented on their key roles and responsibilities in the wake of the COVID-19. This is in line with the CVSU national Standard Operating Procedures as well as the
adapted interagency guidelines on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection in COVID-19.

- UNICEF, as co-lead of Protection Cluster, continues to support the Ministry of Gender, Child and Community Development. On 23 April, UNICEF convened key agencies to review and agree on the way forward to update referral pathways for GBV and Child Protection to be adapted for COVID-19.
- UNICEF is advocating for the continuation of essential services for child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response with government at national and district levels, including social welfare and police. UNICEF is sharing global and regional guidance with counterparts to ensure the protection of those children whose vulnerability is further increased by the exceptional circumstances caused by COVID-19 such as children on the streets, children in institutional care, and migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children.

Education

- In order to keep children learning while in their homes due to COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Education and Continuity of learning Task Force. This week, a draft roadmap of continuity of learning has been developed, and the Emergency Radio Education Programmes for primary school learners (Standard 1 - 8) are set to air beginning of May. A timetable for the lessons has also been developed, which include three subjects (English, Chichewa and Mathematics) for all grades and Science is added for Standard 4-8.
- The Ministry of Education launched online learning for secondary school learners from Form 1 to Form 4 on Tuesday 21 April. It allows secondary school learners to access lessons through the Ministry’s website (https://www.education.gov.mw/), where the lessons have been uploaded. The Memorandum of Understandings signed between the Ministry of Education and telecommunication companies (both Airtel and TNM) allow learners to connect to the website at no data cost. In his official statement, the Minister of Education recognised support from the private sector and other development partners, including UNICEF.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- Since the last report update, more than 135,000 people have been reached with COVID-19 awareness campaigns through mobile vans. This was done in Mzuzu townships and Mchinji District Council and surrounding villages. In total, UNICEF has reached a total of over 200,000 people with WASH-related awareness messages using direct methods like mobile vans.
- More than 300,000 people in 15 districts in the north, central and southern Malawi have been reached with radio messaging on COVID-19. This includes a jingle on COVID-19 prevention disseminated through local /community radio stations in the four UNICEF-supported districts.
- Four additional latrines were completed at Mwanza border post to make a cumulative total of 24 latrines in the four Emergency Treatment Units (ETUs) plus one set at the border in Mwanza.
- At Mchinji ETU, installation of a 5000-litre water tank has been completed including all plumbing and piping works. In the remaining three UNICEF-supported ETUs, the installation of water tanks is in progress.
- UNICEF in close collaboration with Southern Region Water Board is supporting the extension and installation of a tap stand at the Mwanza district border post.
- UNICEF is also supporting rapid water quality testing of 10 boreholes located outside the hospital and the ETU surrounding within a radius of 1 kilometre. All ten samples tested negative, ensuring they are not contaminated and are safe for drinking.
- UNICEF’s partner United Purpose (UP) has distributed copies of Fuko newspaper in Mchinji district featuring image posters on contact and transmission of COVID-19. The images are meant for those who cannot read and write. FUKO, published by the Nation Publication Limited, circulates 40,000 copies per month, reaching over 400,000 in rural areas for free. The UP also distributed 50 leaflets with COVID-19 messages in Mchinji district.
Nutrition

- With UNICEF support, therapeutic nutrition supplies have been distributed to 728 health facilities across all 29 districts in the country as part of the prepositioning in anticipation of a spike in the COVID-19 cases in Malawi and the planned nationwide lockdown. The country has also received additional 556 cartons of F75 and 121 cartons of F100 (therapeutic milk products designed to treat severe malnutrition) as we start preparing supplies in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
- UNICEF partners are disseminating infant and young child feeding and complementary feeding messages in the context of COVID-19. UNICEF supported the development of key messages which include advice to breastfeeding mothers to continue breastfeeding should the infant or young child become sick with suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 or any other illness. The messages are being disseminated through community care groups, and Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) platforms and are expected to reach about 500,000 caregivers of children under five, 200,000 adolescent girls and 100,000 pregnant and lactating mothers.

Communication for Development (C4D)

- Over 8 million people continue to receive messages on COVID-19 prevention through radio stations and mass media. So far, two radio spots are already on air while seven interpersonal communication videos have been produced with English subtitles and are ready to go on air in the coming week.
- A 10-episode radio series is under production integrating key health messages on COVID-19 to remind communities to continue going for routine health services such as immunization, integrated community case management and anti-natal clinic.
- A COVID-19 animated video was launched on 27 April 2020. Another comic is being produced to ensure that children receive age-specific messages on COVID-19 across the country.
- So far, 20,000 people have been reached with COVID-19 messages through social and behaviour change communication activities in 9 Districts.
- Through UNICEF partnership with Development Communications Trust, interactive radio programmes allow people to call in and talk directly to medical personnel. This has helped in countering rumours and myths on COVID-19.

Social Protection

- UNICEF, with UN sister agencies, has supported the development of the guidelines for the Government Urban Cash Initiative. The Initiative aims at assisting vulnerable households living in urban areas with cash transfers attuned to the minimum wage to cushion income losses.

Supply

- With UK Aid funding, UNICEF is distributing locally procured PPE supplies worth approximately US$ 314,000 to targeted districts in Malawi. The PPE include 16,800 surgical masks, 18,760 N95 masks, 600,000 latex gloves, 1,000 heavy-duty gloves, and 1,500 gumboots.
- In addition, UNICEF is expecting the first batch of PPE supplies and medical equipment from the UNICEF Supply Division. The shipment is expected to arrive in Malawi during the first week of May.
- UNICEF is procuring COVID-19 supplies on behalf of the Health Sector Joint Fund (worth about US$ 2 million) and GAVI (worth about US$ 3 million).
- UNICEF has also received a request from the Ministry of Health and has initiated the process of procurement services for COVID-19 supplies with funds from World Bank worth about US$ 3 million.
- The third coordination meeting for UN procurement working group was held on 22 April. The UN Operations Management Team is now actively participating in the working group to provide operational leadership to the response.
Communication

- UNICEF is planning a series of radio, television, print, and online programmes highlighting secondary impacts on children as a result of COVID-19. Initial planning and discussions are ongoing with the selected media company.
- UNICEF continues to produce stories, multimedia contents, infographics, celebrity messages to promote COVID-19 messaging, countering myths and misinformation, and documenting our response in the field. These are being disseminated through various online and offline channels. This week, our social media messages have reached about five million online audiences.
- A COVID-19 song 'Tingathe' (we will) produced by UNICEF Malawi Champion, Sangie, a famous Malawian reggae artist was embraced widely by the public after being broadcast on Times TV and radio; MBC TV and radio; Mibawa TV; Zodiak TV and radio stations. The song targeting children, youth, and their parents promotes COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages.
- UNICEF is continuing to promote global and regional COVID-19 contents on the Internet of Good Things, which had over 40,000 page views the past week.
- UNICEF continues to use U-Report platform extensively to reach people with messaging on COVID-19 through SMS, polling, open-end questions, quiz, information bots, social media, etc. So far, UNICEF has conducted four U-Report polls, including one on COVID-19 Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Children myth-busters quiz. The U-Report chatbot with information on COVID-19 from UNICEF, World Health Organisation and Ministry of Health is still live and has so far registered 471,657 responses.
- UNICEF continues to work closely with partners including the Government and UN agencies for enhanced and evidence-based communications on COVID-19 in Malawi.
- UNICEF continues to update a dedicated COVID-19 page on its website with latest news and information on UNICEF and its partners' response to COVID-19 in Malawi. It also contains useful guidance and reports on the global response to COVID-19.

Next Situation Report: 2020/05/05

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