**Situation Overview**

As of 2 May, 41 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Malawi with three deaths and nine recoveries. The 41 cases are distributed in seven districts: 11 Blantyre, 23 Lilongwe, 1 Zomba, 1 Chikwawa, 1 Nkhotakota, 1 Karonga and 3 Mzuzu. Twenty-five of the cases are reported to have been locally transmitted while 13 were imported, and one case in Blantyre (55-year old male) has an unknown chain of transmission (See the map below).

During the reporting period, there has been a shift in the COVID-19 outbreak epicentre in Malawi from Lilongwe district in the central region to now the northern region, where four cases have been reported (3 Mzuzu and 1 Karonga) in one week.

Persons in the age group of 19-30 have registered the highest number of cases followed by those in the age group of 31-45. So far, there is no reported case in the under-five age group. Recoveries are well distributed in all age groups while all the three deaths have been recorded in one age group (46 – 60 years). Comparison between males and females shows that more cases have been registered among males compared to the females by one point (See figure 3 below), while the recovery was 50 per cent for both male and female. However, more males have died compared to female.
To date, a total of 1,881 high-risk travellers have been followed up and discharged from self-quarantine out of 7,058 that had entered the country. Currently, three borders are still open to allow transit of essential services. UNICEF is proactively working and supporting the government to address the community concerns on COVID-19 through a robust risk communication engagement.

**Preparedness and response actions by UNICEF and partners**

**The Government of Malawi**

- On 28 April, the President restructured the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 into a Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 co-chaired by a Minister and a Public Health Professor, reporting directly to the President. It was announced that the Taskforce will include professionals from public and private sectors, professors and doctors from the University of Malawi, the Christian Health Association, the leader of the Opposition, the Chairperson of the Public Affairs Committee, senior chief and CSOs.
- The Government of Malawi has continued to deploy joint patrol teams comprising of Malawi Defense Forces, Immigration and Police to provide border security patrols while road traffic personnel are ensuring recommended seating arrangements.
- The government has so far recruited and deployed 750 health workers out of the planned 2,000 to various districts to support the national response.

**UN System**

- On 4 May, the Humanitarian Country Team launched an Emergency Appeal to seek US$ 139 million for 25 UN agencies and NGOs to support the government's urgent preparedness and response efforts
from May to October 2020, targeting over 6 million people. In addition to strengthening the public health response to COVID-19, the appeal also focuses on continuing life-saving primary health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, access to medical services for gender-based violence survivors; education; food security and livelihoods support; nutrition services; water, sanitation and hygiene; and, support to social protection, safety net programmes.

**UNICEF Support**

UNICEF has received funding amounting to Euros 500,000 from Irish Aid and has identified key implementing partners (Malawi Red cross, Malawi Institute of Journalism and United Purpose) to support Karonga and Mangochi districts. The support to these two additional districts will include water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, deployment of temporary health workers, and strengthening risk communication and community engagement. This brings the number of UNICEF supported districts to a total of 11: Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mchinji, Dedza, Karonga, Dowa, Zomba, Mzuzu, Karonga, Mangochi.

**Health**

- With UK Aid funding, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) directors to conduct supportive supervision visits in five health facilities namely Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Zomba Central Hospital, Chikwawa District hospital, and Nkhotakota district hospital in the southern part of the country. The team also provided technical guidance to the District Rapid Response Teams in Blantyre, Nkhotakota, Zomba and Chikwawa on how to respond to COVID-19.
- Guidelines on the use of community masks, produced with UNICEF’s support, as a means of reducing infection in the community have been approved by the MoH. The guidelines will be distributed to all districts in the country.

**Child Protection**

- With support from the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF partner Save the Children has mapped and reconstituted 34 Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs), which will provide essential services at community levels to support victims/survivors of violence, in 6 districts (Machinga, Nsanje, Dowa, Ntchisi, Mzimba and Nkhata Bay). From 27 April to 1 May, five CVSU committees (3 in Machinga and 2 in Nkhata Bay) were oriented on their key roles and responsibilities in the wake of the COVID-19 in line with the CVSU national Standard Operating Procedures and the adapted interagency guidelines on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection in COVID-19. In total, 15 CVSU Committees out of the 34, have been oriented so far.
- UNICEF is supporting the development and finalization of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) referral pathways. This constitutes a flowchart of the referral processes and the contacts of the MHPSS service points across the country. MHPSS capacity enhancement is supported in part by the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative.
- UNICEF undertook a [U-report poll](https://www.unicef.org/reportpoll) on myths related to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Violence against Children, and COVID-19 to raise awareness on heightened risks of violence, especially for adolescent girls, and reporting channels through the Child Helpline and GBV Crisis Line.
- UNICEF continues to advocate 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 working with counterparts on Malawi specific guidance for frontline workers in social welfare and the police to ensure the protection of those children and community members whose vulnerability is further increased by the exceptional circumstances caused by COVID-19.
- UNICEF, as co-lead of Protection Cluster, continues to support the Ministry of Gender, Child and Community
Education

- Schools in Malawi remain closed. No date has yet been suggested for reopening. UNICEF continues working with the Ministry of Education and Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) to complete development/adaptation of lessons for Primary and Secondary for its broadcast on radio and other online platforms.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- Through different approaches, UNICEF has reached a total of 347,730 people with WASH-related messages. Of these, about 67,743 are children under 18 years, and a total of 279,987 are adults. The approaches include the use of handwashing demonstrations at markets, communities and townships, mobile vans, and community radios.
- The total number of gender-responsive emergency latrines installed at Emergency Treatment Units (ETUs) with UNICEF support has now reached 31. Additional seven emergency prefabricated latrines have been installed at Mchinji border post and at Kamuzu Central Hospital ETU in Lilongwe. Each latrine ensures privacy and has functional handwashing facility and soap.
- Installation of 500-litre backup water storage tanks was completed in the four targeted ETUs in Blantyre, Mwanza, Mchinji, and Mzuzu, and water trucking and storage has started.
- UNICEF as WASH cluster co-lead continues supporting coordination, including hosting and facilitating meetings, and guiding member agencies to improve their response plans.
- At the sub-national level with UNICEF support, United Purpose conducted coordination meetings with district partners (District Environmental Health Officers and District Water Officers) in Mzuzu and Mwanza districts.

Nutrition

- With technical and financial support from UNICEF, Nutrition Cluster partners at the national level and in all the 28 districts in Malawi have now received the guidelines on the implementation of nutrition interventions in the context of COVID-19. These guidelines were developed with UNICEF support and cleared by the MoH. Starting from 4 May, the MoH is conducting orientation sessions on the same in all the 28 districts.
- UNICEF, through Field Monitors, continue to conduct surveillance of the nutrition situation across Malawi, providing mentorship and ensuring compliance of programme implementation in the context of COVID-19. Weekly calls are being conducted with the Field Monitors on the nutrition situation in all the districts. Data for March 2020 is showing a 26 per cent increase in admissions of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) into the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme compared to March 2019.

Communication for Development (C4D)

- 158 traditional leaders from Lilongwe, Dedza and Mzuzu have been oriented on their role in the community mobilization for COVID-19. Specific emphasis was placed on Kaliyeka area, which has produced several COVID-19 positive cases, and where the community was not receptive to the testing of the contacts for the confirmed case. The leaders have started to engage their people.
- Broadcasting of a 10-episode radio series started on 28 April and will be on air for several weeks to ensure continuity of routine services including immunization, integrated community case management and anti-natal clinic.
- A COVID-19 animated video has gone on air and is being circulated in different social media platforms and has received good feedback. Plans to develop Chichewa videos are underway.
- 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.
Community Engagement sessions, including community radio dialogues, edutainment by partners, have so far reached about 65,000 people with COVID-19 messages through social and behaviour change communication activities in nine Districts.

UNICEF partner, the Story Workshop Education Trust has reached more than 2,000 with COVID-19 messages through social media coverage. This is in addition to the ongoing interactive radio programmes, that are proving to be efficient and are providing a platform for medical personnel to give clarification on rumours/myths which are being brought up by callers during the broadcasting.

Social Protection

UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development to identify the most suitable e-payment solution for the implementation of the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention, building on UNICEF’s earlier work to develop a national e-payment solution for social cash transfer programmes.

Supply

With UNICEF support, Malawi is expecting to receive 30 oxygen concentrators in May, which were ordered from UNICEF Supply Divisions.

UNICEF has started the distribution of UK Aid-funded, locally procured Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) worth approximately US$ 314,000 to the districts in Malawi. The PPEs include surgical masks (16,800 pieces), N95 masks (18,760 pieces), latex gloves (600,000 pieces), heavy-duty gloves (1,000 pieces) and gumboots (1,500 pairs).

Communication

UNICEF is partnering with the Zodiak Broadcasting Station, which has a nationwide coverage in Malawi to put a spotlight on COVID-19 impact on children and their families in Malawi. Planning is underway to produce a series of radio, television, print, and online programmes highlighting secondary impacts on children as a result of COVID-19.

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.

- UNICEF continues to engage various influencers including Hayze Engola and a popular local comedian Tannah, popularly known as Mr Broken English – who is sharing COVID-19 messages in the form of comedy and the public response to his messages have been highly positive.
- UNICEF’s Regional Office (East South Africa) released a re-recorded song ‘Pata’ by UNICEF’s Goodwill Ambassador, Angelique Kidjo. The song has been distributed widely in Malawi with stations namely Zodiak, Times, MBC, Mibawa and PLFM. The song encourages people to stay safe and avoid touching each other.

UNICEF continues to push COVID-19 messages on its social media channels. There has been a drastic increase in our reach and engagement in the last one month. UNICEF Facebook now has almost 100,000 followers (a steep increase from just about 15,000 in 1 March) and UNICEF Twitter with 22,700 followers (1,000 organic followers in April). This week, our social media messages have reached more than one million online audiences with more than 80,000 engagement.

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. In the past week, UNICEF sent out a poll to U-Reporters on social vulnerabilities during COVID-19. The poll was sent to 216,195 U-Reporters. 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 493,773 responses. We also started collecting personal experiences from U-Reporters on how their communities have been fighting COVID-19. The stories will be shared on U-Report Malawi and UNICEF websites and social media sites.
UNICEF continues to work closely with partners including the Government and UN agencies for enhanced and evidence-based communications on COVID-19 in Malawi. A story (UNICEF, WFP, RCO) on COVID-19 response titled Malawi braces for Covid-19 was published on the global UN website. There is also another tweaked version on UN News section.

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: 2020/12/05

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