Malawi’s Health Minister in support for UNICEF’s Wear a Mask campaign © UNICEF Malawi 2020

Reporting Period: 24-30 September 2020

Highlights

- UNICEF through Malawi Red Cross continues to support government to strengthen surveillance systems and has trained an additional 41 members of the Rapid Response Team on screening and contact tracing. This is key in infection prevention and control considering that there is an increase in the number of travellers entering through Kamuzu International Airport and other land border crossings.

- UNICEF is supporting the scale up of electronic integrated disease surveillance and reporting to improve reporting of suspected and confirmed cases from district to national level. Through Clinton Health Access Initiative and Luke International, UNICEF procured 489 tablets and distributed to 26 of the 29 local councils.

- The UNICEF-supported back to school campaign led by the Ministry of Information has so far reached 280,000 people in 13 districts using multimedia channels including use

- During the reporting period, UNICEF distributed 10 plastic water tanks (10,000-liter capacity each) to selected schools in Nsanje and Chikwawa through the respective District Environmental Health Officers. The tanks will be used as part of the equipment for the solar water schemes to ensure availability of safe water for drinking and hand washing.

Situation in Numbers as of 29 September 2020

- **5,772** confirmed cases
- **4,245** recoveries
- **179** deaths
- **52,852** tested samples
- **1,348** active cases

Situation Overview

Malawi continues to register a reduction in the number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases. During the reporting week, the country has registered 33 new cases compared to 38 in the previous week. The total number of active cases is also on a downward trend and now stands at 1,348, which represents 23 per cent of all registered cases. Of the total cases, 4,623 are locally transmitted and 1,149 are imported infections.

The total number recoveries registered in the reporting week (181), is higher than the number of new cases registered during the same period by about 83 percent. With four per cent more recoveries reported compared to the prior week, the total number of recoveries so far registered stands at 4,243 and represents 74 per cent of all cases. No new fatalities have been registered since the last report thus remaining at 179.

Since the opening of the Kamuzu International Airport for commercial flights on 1 September, about 4,970 travellers have been screened with no major reported incidences. All passengers are required to present a negative COVID-19 test result on departure and those arriving in Malawi are required to present a COVID-19 certificate for a negative result obtained in the last 72 hours.

Active tracing and monitoring of contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases are ongoing. Although, there has been a small improvement in tracing contacts and reporting of alerts from 71 in the previous week to 556 during the reporting period, the country continues to experience shortage of test kits.

This has led to reduction in the number laboratories conducting testing from 51 to eight (8). UNICEF is purchasing test kit consumables worth US$ 360,000 that will enable several laboratories to use Thermofisher test kits and utilize 20 test kits that were donated by the People’s Republic of China to the Ministry of Health. The government is working with engineers already in the country to optimize the current testing platforms to be open to Taqpath test kits as well.

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). This is being done 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

- The National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee continues to meet to review COVID-19 related recommendations from the cluster system.
- Clusters continue to hold meetings for better response coordination. Information relating to COVID-19 resource mobilization, allocation, programmatic implementation is regularly being updated.
- UNICEF is the co-lead agency for the Education, Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Protection Clusters, while also playing a key role in the Health Cluster.
- UNICEF participates in Humanitarian Country Team and the Inter-Cluster Coordination meetings which provide a platform for cross-sectoral coordination. The meetings are now taking place once every fortnight.

Malawi COVID-19 Supply Chain system

Since the beginning of the pandemic, UNICEF has procured COVID-19 supplies worth US$ 8.1 million comprising of various Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), medicines, medical consumables, medical equipment and WASH supplies. This includes supplies amounting to 1.35 million USD procured for MoH under the Health Services Joint Fund (HSJF) as part procurement services and supplies acquired as part of UNICEFs contribution in ensuring continued access to essential infection prevention and control; with support from Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) (US$ 4,096,946.51), World Bank (US$ 1, 634, 218.54), and GAVI (US$ 1,062,838.55).

During the reporting period, UNICEF distributed 10 plastic water tanks (10,000 litre capacity each) to selected schools in Nsanje and Chikwawa through the respective District environmental health officers. The tanks will be used as part of the equipment for the solar water schemes to ensure availability of safe water for drinking and hand washing.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality

UNICEF is supporting the scale up of electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance and Reporting (eIDSR) to improve reporting of suspected and confirmed cases from districts to the national level. Through Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and Luke International, UNICEF procured 489 tablets and distributed to 26 of the 29 local councils. The surveillance system is now linked to District Health Information System Two (DHIS2). The 26 districts that are already linked can now report real time surveillance data electronically to the central level. The remaining 3 will be supported by other partners.

In the recent weeks, there has been an increase in the number of travellers entering Malawi through Kamuzu International Airport (KIA) and other land border crossings. UNICEF through to Malawi Red Cross (MRCS) continues to support the government to strengthen surveillance systems. During the
reporting week, additional 41 members of the Rapid Response Team were trained to support screening and contact tracing in Karonga and Mangochi districts with funding from the Irish Government. Within the reporting period, more about 5,900 road travellers who entered through Karonga Chitipa and about 621 that entered through Kamuzu international airport were screened by health workers with support from MRCS volunteers.

The number of people reached with WASH related messages through UNICEF support has now surpassed 4.2 million. Different approaches are being used to disseminate the messages including community radios, handwashing demonstrations (at markets, villages and townships), mobile van messaging, information education and communication materials and newspapers. During the reporting week, UNICEF through United Purpose reached out to an additional 32,844 people through mobile van promotions and another 1,938 people through demonstrations on proper handwashing.

Work to support infection prevention and control enhancements at emergency treatment centres (ETUs), border posts and other public places is ongoing. To date, 112 emergency latrines have been installed at ETUs (82), border posts (22) and Machinga teachers training centre returnee reception centre (8). Each latrine has a functional handwashing station with soap and ensures privacy. In addition, 20 permanent toilets have been constructed at Mchinji ETU (4) and at two Health Centres in Mzuzu (16). Similar work is ongoing in Blantyre and Mwanza.

To ensure availability of safe water at these facilities, UNICEF has been supporting water quality testing and treatment of contaminated waterpoints at and around hospitals and the emergency treatment units. In addition, construction of solar powered water schemes by private contractors has been completed at ETUs in Mchinji, Mzuzu and Blantyre.

Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

UNICEF continued to support implementation of risk communication and community engagement interventions using various delivery platforms. With funding from UKaid and the Irish Government, over one million people have been reached with COVID-19 messages through door to door campaigns, mobile van messaging, community drama sessions and social media. During the reporting period, 453 people with disabilities have also been reached with the messages.

Through the partnership with Malawi Institute of Journalism, 5,785 radio and TV spots have been broadcast. Radio monitors followed up with 3,100 radio listeners to understand their knowledge on COVID-19 as heard from the radio. The findings indicate that 92% of the interviewed listeners (2,904) were able to recall the COVID-19 messages.

Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services

With support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology is continuing with distance learning programmes. Radio programmes for the third term have been rebroadcast since 14 September. To date, 72 out of 400 programmes have been broadcasted. Development of radio programmes for first term of the next academic year has started; scope and sequence have been completed, and tutors will start developing the content.

Based on results from U-report poll on school reopening, 55 per cent of learners indicate that they will return to school once it reopens while 41 percent indicate that they will go back only when safety is guaranteed and 4 per cent say that they are not going back due to several reasons. The reasons
given by those not going back to school include unaffordability of school fees, fear of catching the virus, pregnancy, because they got married or being preoccupied with other chores.

A back to school campaign led by the Ministry of Information using multimedia channels including mobile van messaging and radio has been initiated. Approximately 280,000 people have been reached in 13 districts; Mangochi, Chiradzulu, Thyolo, Machinga, Mulanje, Zomba, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Nsanje, Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Dowa and Ntchisi through the back to school campaign. Additionally, a total of 4 mini videos and 6 jingles on benefits of education, continuity of learning, prevention of violence in schools, ending child marriages, prevention of COVID-19 have been produced by Ministry of Education and will be aired on MBC TV and radio as well as community radio stations.

UNICEF’s partner Story Workshop Education Trust (SWET) continues to disseminate messages and engage adolescent girls and boys and their parents in Dedza, Salima and Mangochi through door-to-door activities, drama and theatre performances, community meetings, letters, loud hailing, radio drama called *Zimachitika* (on MBC radio, Bembeke FM and Dzimwe community radio) and social media including Facebook and WhatsApp. Over 15,700 people including community members and local leaders have been reached with adolescent nutrition, protection, hygiene, COVID-19 prevention messages.

UNICEF has also been supporting efforts to ensure continued access to essential protection services especially for the vulnerable groups. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, UNICEF has aided the provision of psychological first aid (PFA) and has so far enabled 4,100 callers to the national child helpline and gender-based violence (GBV) crisis line to be supported. Of the 4,100, about 90 callers were supported during the reporting period including 61 callers with issues related to GBV and child protection, including 23 child marriage and 15 defilement cases. All the cases were referred to the relevant service providers, including police, social welfare, judiciary, health workers, and other partners. UNICEF also continued to support awareness raising through SMS on how to report violence cases through helplines and on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. This week 10,000 people were reached with the messages.

Additionally, UNICEF support has so far permitted over 15,000 people in 6 districts (Blantyre, Machinga, Dowa, Mchinji, Zomba, Mulanje) to access community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) by District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs). Of the 15,000, over 1,200 people (including 900 children) in Blantyre were assisted during the period of 16-23 September.

Furthermore, UNICEF continues providing financial and technical support to District Social Welfare Offices to facilitate the follow up and provision of the necessary assistance to vulnerable people, including children living or working on the streets and children without parental or family care. During the reporting period in Blantyre district, 10 children living or working on the streets have been provided with Psychosocial Support (PSS) and necessary material support, bringing the total number of children supported to 711 in Blantyre, Machinga, Dedza, and Zomba districts since the beginning of the response.

**Human Interest Stories and External Media**

UNICEF issued a press release on the Top 5 solutions presented by young people in the COVID-19 youth challenge. This resulted in media coverage on MBC radio and TV and international media – Channel Africa and eNCA TV.

UNICEF supported the Public Communication Cluster through the Ministry of Information to convene a media workshop for 50 journalists on COVID-19. The aim was to orient journalists and enhance local media coverage of the pandemic especially around COVID-19 response and coordination as well emerging issues such as reopening of schools.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government and UN in Malawi, continues to promote the ‘wear a mask campaign’ messages through its channels, including the video featuring political leaders (Cabinet Ministers) which is airing on Zodiak TV to encourage the general public to wear masks and follow COVID-19 preventive measures.

Through the SMS platform U-Report, UNICEF sent out a poll to measure changes in knowledge, attitude and practices related to COVID-19.

During the reporting week, UNICEF’s social media messages on COVID-19 prevention and awareness engaged about 32,000 online audiences on all three platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). 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.

**Funding Overview and Partnerships**

UNICEF needs an estimated US$ 55,600,000 to respond effectively to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and children to complement the government efforts in Malawi. The proposed geographical coverage aims at targeting high risk as well as vulnerable districts from the North, Central and Southern parts of the country through a balanced approach seeking to leave no one behind. The proposed integrated programme approach will ensure comprehensive and holistic coverage of child needs, especially of the most vulnerable.

To date, UNICEF has received US$ 20,976,214 contributions from public and private donors. However, a funding gap of 75 per cent remains. Specific funding requirements, resources available so far and the current funding gaps per sector are displayed in Annex B.

**Next SitRep:** 7 October 2020

**UNICEF Malawi COVID-19 website page:** https://www.unicef.org/malawi/coronavirus-disease--19
### Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Total results as of 16 September 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></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>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>719</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>Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential newborn care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses and HIV care through UNICEF supported community health workers and health facilities.</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>168,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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>5000</td>
<td>6,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C4D</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with COVID-19 messages 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>1,005,280</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>3,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of caregivers to children aged 0-23 months reached with messages aiming to promote breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 through national communication campaigns</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>313,284</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>11,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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>21,000*</td>
<td>19,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children without parental or family care provided with alternative care arrangements</td>
<td>350**</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning</td>
<td>2,139,311</td>
<td>1,423,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households benefitting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support</td>
<td>457,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Target increased from 1,500 to 21,000

** Target has been revised from 30 to 350
Annex B: Malawi COVID-19 funding status by sector as of 16 Sept. 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>Funding Requirements</th>
<th>Funds received against the appeal</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>$30,600,000</td>
<td>$9,337,367</td>
<td>$21,262,633</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>$8,600,000</td>
<td>$736,793</td>
<td>$7,863,207</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>$632,054</td>
<td>$367,946</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>$3,200,000</td>
<td>$6,484,529*</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Protection</td>
<td>$7,200,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$7,200,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL US$:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$55,600,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,190,743</strong></td>
<td><strong>$41,693,786</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The actual amount received from the education sector is $10,270,000. Of the total amount, 6,484,529 is what is earmarked for use in 2020 while the rest will be utilised in 2021; hence the revision to reflect only the funding available in 2020

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