Highlights

- UNICEF is working with the government to implement the guidance document on child nutrition responses during and post the COVID-19 lockdown. This includes advocacy for the continuation of essential healthcare, such as child and maternal nutrition services.

- Department of Health figures show that there were interruptions of immunisation services during the COVID-19 level 5 lockdown. There has been a sharp decrease in coverage of the 2nd dose of measles vaccine, from 77% to 55%, sparking fears of an outbreak, with lowest coverage in the North West province at 43% followed by Western Cape at 48%.

- UNICEF continues to support the back to school initiative led by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Child friendly standard operation procedures (SOPs) have been printed and distributed, along with posters with COVID-19 messaging and how to stay safe at school. On 08 June, the exit Grades 7 (primary) and 12 (secondary) returned to school across the country.

Situation Overview

- South Africa has seen a significant increase in confirmed cases, rising by more than 6,000 for five continuous days and the country continues to have the highest number of confirmed cases in Africa at 151,209.

- The total number of deaths is now 2,657, with a case fatality rate of 1.8%

- Western Cape Province with 41.3% of all cases is still the worst affected followed by Gauteng with 28.4% of all infections.

- The lockdown in South Africa remains at level 3, meaning that more people are on the move and COVID-19 prevention messaging continues to be critical.
Coordination

- UNICEF is supporting the Department of Health in developing a district response plan to address a possible increase in the number of acute malnutrition cases presenting themselves at healthcare facilities after the lockdown. This support comes off the back of data from the District Health Information System that shows a drop in the coverage of child nutrition services.

- UNICEF continues to coordinate the WASH response with provincial-level Water Departments to ensure effective targeting of communities requiring water and sanitation services.

Summary of Preparedness and Response Actions

Education

1. On 08 June, the exit Grades 7 (primary) and 12 (secondary) returned to school across the country. There were reports of infections within schools, but the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and partners are closely monitoring the situation and guiding the phased reopening process.

2. Preparations are ongoing for the second phase of school reopening that starts on 06 July. This will see nearly 6 million children in the Foundation Phase (Grades R – 3), 6, 10, 11; schools for children with learning and other disabilities; and technical skills schools will report back after more than three months off. The remaining grades will return on 04 August. The plan is for 50% capacity at any given time and schools can decide on how to implement this. Private schools with 125 students or less can operate at capacity beginning third week of June.

3. UNICEF continues to support the back to school initiative led by the DBE. Child friendly standard operation procedures (SOPs) have been printed and distributed, along with posters with COVID-19 messaging and how to stay safe at school. Videos are currently being produced to support teachers, parents and children on the back to school process. UNICEF has also shared the updated ‘Framework for Schools Reopening’ with the DBE and this tool continues to help inform and monitor progress on schools reopening.

4. UNICEF has reached 5.1 million children with remote learning support and is embarking on the second phase of radio and television broadcasts before schools fully open. As the phased return to school continues, many students are still at home and broadcasts will now be scheduled for times that prioritise earlier grades, as opposed to the exit and examination classes who have returned.

5. UNICEF is supporting the DBE on the ‘curriculum trimming exercise’ for the catch-up programme through technical provided to the national education collaboration trust (NECT).

6. Early childhood development (ECD) and basic education resources, Tshwagarano Ka Bana (‘Let’s play, learn and grow together’) and the Active Learning@Home series continue to be disseminated widely to parents and children through multiple platforms, from social media, to education platforms, websites and hard copies. The ‘Do It More Foundation’ are shared the educational resources during food distributions of more than three million meals to vulnerable communities.

7. UNICEF is supporting the drafting a concept note for an education sector wide approach to the COVID-19 crisis, following lessons learned that highlighted the need for a more coordinated response. This work comes from UNICEF’s central and coordinating role within the national education sector emergency steering team.

Child and Social Protection

1. COVID-19 parenting tips are now live on the South African Internet of Good Things site, providing parents with tips and activities to encourage the use of positive parenting techniques. These tips will be translated into the official languages for increased reach and use.

2. The deteriorating mental health of children during COVID-19 is a concern and the UNICEF South Africa Child Protection Section engaged with the country’s leading minds on the issue through a webinar organised by Scifest Africa about the wellbeing and mental health of children.

3. The COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating and lifting the lid on inequalities and racial issues within societies. In this regard, a webinar was held with multiple sector partners, including international organisations, to discuss racial discrimination in schools and the need for psychosocial support to alleviate the impact and to tackle the issue.
4. Following the easing of the COVID-19 lockdown, there has been a surge in violence across the country. In response, a webinar was held on how to engage young people in tackling the high levels of violence in the country and to build youth resilience. The result was an understanding among the Department of Basic Education and partners on the importance of raising awareness among young people of the scourge of GBV and violence against children to encourage them to become responsible citizens by not perpetuating the violence.

5. On 29 June and in response to increased reports of GBV following the move to level 3 of COVID-19 lockdown, the first session was held by the Presidency to unpack the National Strategic Plan on GBV with up to 250 participants from across society. The result was a common understanding about the goals of the strategic plan and the need to put in place a specific action plan to effect change.

6. UNICEF signed an agreement with religious leaders to work with the child protection sector and to use their influence to advocate for change of harmful cultural and religious norms to better protect children and to help reduce the burden of violence against children during and beyond the COVID-19 epidemic.

7. UNICEF continues to support counselling for migrants affected by COVID-19 and those who have been displaced due to conflict. A total of 75 migrants (38 men and 37 women) received counselling on COVID-19 and support on family reunification. UNICEF and partners continue to raise awareness about the virus by developing and disseminating key messages to migrants in a range of languages. This is done through radio, distribution of flyers and online platforms, reaching about 800 migrants.

8. UNICEF continues to partner with Childline South Africa and in the past two weeks a total of 5,978 calls were received, of which 53% of callers received general counselling. Issues and incidents, including violence against children, were reported by 11% of callers. Therapy sessions on violence and mental health issues were held with 529 callers and 112 referrals were made to the Department of Social Development, as well as 750 referrals to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), South African Police Service (SAPS) and Department of Basic Education (DBE). A further 438 referrals were made to NGO’s for follow-up support.

Health and Nutrition

1. UNICEF and WHO are supporting the health department in developing immunization catch-up plans and conducting communication campaign to persuade caregivers to take children who have missed their shots during lockdown to health facilities to get their vaccinations.

2. New data from the National Institute for Communicable Disease is showing that more infants are testing HIV positive at birth, which most likely confirms that some mothers missed ARV treatments during the lockdown period. UNICEF provided extensive data analysis support to the Department of Health through the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) Technical Working Group. UNICEF also supported the development of pediatric HIV messages to be aired on SABC to reiterate the importance of continuing treatment, in-turn improving demand for child health services.

3. Peer mentors are being trained to help screen for GBV and to identify potential cases, a total of 9,101 screenings have taken place. Due to COVID-19 and the food and work insecurity, clients are hesitant to report GBV because they depend on their partner financially and are scared to risk homelessness or retribution.

4. There is an urgent need for a more coordinated response to GBV, as peer mentors struggle to refer and provide follow-up support to suspected GBV clients. Next steps are to improve communication, identify GBV partners at the district level and improve referral.

WASH

1. UNICEF finalized a new agreement with World Vision South Africa to implement the WASH / RCCE programme in nine highly vulnerable communities across four provinces. A technical working group is being set up to support RCCE capacity development in the areas identified.

2. UNICEF and World Vision worked with the Department of Water and Sanitation, through the Water and Sanitation National COVID-19 Command Centre, to put in place an additional 9 handwashing with soap stations in KwaZulu-Natal province and eight stations in the North West province. A further 13 stations are also to be installed in Northern Cape province.
Communication, Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

**Communication**

1. South Africa was featured in the global report on the role of universal child benefits in reducing poverty. The global Press Release was ‘localised’ to reflect the importance of child support grants in South Africa and the COVID-19 related grant top-up.

2. UNICEF played a lead role in the UN Communications Group (UNCG) on drafting ‘return to office’ key messages for all staff, prioritising duty of care and providing clear guidance.

3. On misinformation, UNICEF leveraged the UN’s ‘pause’ campaign on social media to highlight the importance of ‘pausing before sharing’ social media content to help stop the spread of false information related to COVID-19 and other issues in South Africa and globally.

4. UNICEF Child Protection featured on broadcaster ENCA related to the global report on violence against children.

**C4D / Risk Communication and Community Engagement**

1. UNICEF finally has a seat in the national RCCE coordinating committee, strengthening links with government, WHO and IFRC. The members will allow UNICEF to better engage government and all partners on scaling up risk communication and community engagement work as the COVID-19 infection rates continue to rise.

2. Three WASH / RCCE ‘dipstick surveys’ were completed to provide insights into youth and community-leaders knowledge, gaps, concerns and confidence in preventing COVID-19 in their communities.

3. The ‘Tippy Tap’ challenge is being prepared in partnership with World Vision to support vulnerable communities in developing their own simple and cost-effective ways to use the limited access to safe water and soap that they have.

**Funding Overview and Partnerships**

1. Truworths donated US$11,250 for the WASH program to support the installation of hand washing stations in informal settlements.

2. Standard Bank employees donated US$2,000 to psychosocial support work.

3. Procter & Gamble (France) donated US$100,000 to support the COVID19 health response, with a focus on the nutrition and immunisation response.

4. Unilever provided 120,000 soap bars to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 through improved handwashing hygiene. The donation was valued at US$320,000.

5. The ‘Buckets of Care’ fundraising campaign was scaled up and supported by A-listers (celebrities) who shared the call for donations across their social media platforms.

6. The CEO Network was recognised within UNICEF, winning the global Inspire Awards ‘Fundraising and Partnerships’ category at the UNICEF annual Skill Share event, this year a virtual gathering. This recognised the importance of increasing dialogue with the corporate sector in South Africa to join efforts and collaboration in achieving results for children, including leveraging such partnerships during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Challenges**

- The Western Cape COVID-19 provincial strategy has focused on case management, with contact tracing, quarantine and isolation programmes proving difficult to implement. Many people are reluctant to quarantine and isolate, despite government having secured specific sites in the province. This exacerbates the risk of spread of infections in communities, especially in households where it is impossible to self-isolate given the limited space.
• People are struggling to adapt and adhere to new behaviours, such as regular hand washing, social distancing and the correct and consistent wearing of masks. Behavioral and social scientists are helping the government to tailor more effective risk communication and community engagement interventions.

• There are still challenges in coordinating the psychosocial support response and ensuring the best system possible. There are individual players in the sector, but some have limited reach and there is no clear mapping of all partners.

• The lack of a sound framework for monitoring online learning remains a challenge and affects reporting. For example, the numbers of children engaging in online learning does not include the 2Enable platform. In response, UNICEF is working with 2Enable and the Department of Basic Education to capture this information. Broadcasting data also relies on estimates from the broadcasting council, as well as the respective media houses, however provincial stations are struggling to provide exact data.

• School reopening has been a contested issue and is one of the most debated on COVID-19 in South Africa. This has seen some civil society organisations take the DBE to court and parents are torn between sending their children to school, not only for learning but also nutrition through access to school meals, while the fear of infection remains. There have been several changes to the scheduled phased reopening process and discussions are ongoing.

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### Annex A

**Summary of Programme Results, UNICEF South Africa, June 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Target to 31 Dec 2020</th>
<th>Results as of 30 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>3,700,000</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>23,500</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><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>29,500</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: 171,858 (80,252 children and 91,606 women)</td>
<td>June 2020: 135,475 (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>34,213</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</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</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary impact on women and children</td>
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<td></td>
<td></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>
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</tbody>
</table>