COVID-19 EMERGENCY CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused more than 3,025,835 deaths as reported to the World Health Organization by 20 April 2021. Africa recorded 80,944 deaths with just over 1,200 deaths recorded in Zambia. At the same time, the social and economic impacts of the pandemic are threatening economies and livelihoods, undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty projections suggest that the social and economic impacts of the crisis are likely to be significant and unfortunately may be long-term in some countries. The situation is likely to deteriorate further as the ripple effects move through the global economy and in the sub-region.

Since the first confirmed COVID-19 case in March 2020, Zambia has followed regional trends with an initial first wave of infections, followed by a lull and then a sharp rise during a second wave of the pandemic. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have been particularly heavy in the tourism sector and in disruptions to trade.

As a social protection response to this, the Government of the Republic of Zambia with technical support from the United Nations (UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, WFP) and non-government organisations (Plan International, ChildFund and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement) is leading the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) programme to support vulnerable households across 22 districts.

EMERGENCY CASH AGAINST THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 ECT programme has two objectives. The first is to reduce the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable households by stabilizing household income. The second objective is to support the fight against the pandemic by facilitating compliance with pandemic control measures such as physical distancing.

The COVID-19 ECT builds on the Government’s ongoing efforts to support vulnerable households. It does this by providing additional support to households that are already identified as vulnerable and therefore enrolled on the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme and by supporting additional households who are vulnerable as a result of the repercussions of COVID-19 (see Diagram 1). The COVID-19 ECT is a temporary initiative that will last for six months.
Three shock-responsive social protection strategies:

1. **Vertical Expansion:**
   - Provide Emergency Cash to households already enrolled on the SCT programme to cope with the emergency.

2. **Horizontal Expansion:**
   - Additional beneficiaries for the duration of the emergency such as:
     - Informal Economy Workers
     - Orphans and vulnerable children
     - Persons with disability or illness
     - Households with a member of 65 years old and above
     - Female headed households with at least two children

3. **Alignment:**
   - Link the C-ECT to other parts of the overall COVID-19 response, such as:
     - Hygiene promotion
     - Nutrition
     - Protection
     - Public health
     - Disability inclusion
GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfers will be provided to over 200,000 vulnerable households (approx. 1.2m people) in 22 districts across Zambia that have been identified as the most severely affected districts. These districts are Chilanga, Chililabombwe, Chingola, Chipata, Chirundu, Chisamba, Kabwe, Kafue, Kalulushi, Kasama, Kazungula, Kitwe, Livingstone, Luangwa, Lusaka, Mansa, Mongu, Mpika, Mufilira, Nakonde, Ndola and Solwezi.
**SUPPORT PACKAGE**

Each beneficiary household will receive a total of K400 per month for six months through bi-monthly payments of K800 or tri-monthly payments of K1200 or a one-off payment of K2400 depending on the district. In addition to the transfer, beneficiaries will also receive information on health and COVID-19, personal hygiene, nutrition, and protecting themselves from violence and abuse. Those with disability-specific needs will also receive additional support.
PAYMENT MODALITY

Beneficiaries will receive their transfer through a Mobile Network provider or through a Pay Point.

In areas where network connectivity is reliable, beneficiaries will receive mobile phones and sim cards to facilitate payments and other services through their phones.

GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

The COVID-19 ECT is given on the premise of non-discrimination and zero tolerance to any form of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, bribery and corruption. Beneficiaries are therefore encouraged to report any abuse or make queries using the COVID-19 ECT grievance mechanism that has been put in place in support of the programme. More information on the grievance mechanism is available at the District Social Welfare Office.
Support from cooperating partners


For more information, please contact:

Director, Social Welfare
Kennedy Mumba • Kennedy.Mumba@mcdsw.gov.zm

Principal Information Education and Communications Officer
Weka Banda • Weka.Banda@mcdsw.gov.zm

Or write to:

The Director,
Department of Social Welfare,
Ministry of Community Development and Social Services,
Private Bag W252, Community House, Sadzu Road,
LUSAKA