HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 reached 34 as of 1 April. Multiple clusters of contacts have been identified through active tracing carried out by the authorities.
- Testing capacity is available, a quarantine site has been established and two more under preparation. A care center for severe cases has been set up in Arta, 40 km from the capital. Additional support is required to bring to scale preparedness and response capacity.
- Since 23 March the authorities imposed a general lockdown, except for essential services. Traffic has been restricted to minimum, and only allowed with administrative authorization.
- All passenger movement (aircraft/railway/boat) continue to be suspended since 18 March. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs restricted military and humanitarian flights with personnel until 3 April, a decision which is likely to be further extended. Civil and military cargo movements continue.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

As of 31 March 2020, the Ministry of Health has confirmed 34 cases of COVID-19 in Djibouti (one already returned to his native country). All cases have been recorded in or around the capital city.

Since 24 March car circulation has been restricted to minimum, and only allowed with administrative authorization. Armed forces, police and gendarmerie work hand and hand to facilitate the smooth running of general lockdown. Difficulties however exist for those vulnerable who do not have a fixed dwelling where to stay indoors, including the poorest families, migrants and street children, as well as those who have lost their jobs – mostly daily workers and those who work in the informal sector.

On 28 March, the President established a crisis committee, under the Prime Minister leadership. Sub-committees looking at the multidimensional aspects of the crisis are under finalization. Engagement is ongoing to ensure a full-fledged, optimized and coordinated use of existing assets in country and beyond, in view of the global nature of the crisis, which the UN are ready to support.

In addition to government funds and assets already deployed, on 31 March, the President launched an Emergency and Solidarity Fund with an initial state funding of 5.65 million USD and called for donations from international partners and public budgets to meet the multifaceted needs generated by COVID19 in country, including for patient care and the purchase of health equipment.
At the regional level, a Presidential level IGAD Extraordinary Summit on COVID-19 held on 31 March commended the extraordinary efforts of WHO to coordinate global and regional responses to the pandemic and called for a regional coordinated response and the establishment of an emergency fund in support to the national health systems of IGAD countries.

At the global level, as the coronavirus pandemic continues to gain ground and more than 25,000 people have died worldwide, the UN Secretary General called to redouble efforts in the fight against the virus. On 25 March he launched a US $2 billion global humanitarian response plan to fight COVID-19 in some of the world’s most vulnerable countries, in a bid to protect millions of people and stop the virus. The response plan will be implemented by UN agencies, with international NGOs and NGO consortia playing a direct role in the response. On 31 March, he issued a call for action as he launched the report on the social-economic impact of COVID-19. In this document, the Secretary-General calls on everyone to act together to address the impacts of the crisis and lessen the impact on the people, and on the society, though an immediate and urgent health response, but also immediate action across the social and economic spheres of life affected by the pandemic.

**PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

Some 50 female guides have been mobilized the neighborhoods of Djibouti-ville to raise awareness of the population to wash their hands, keep a distance of one meter and follow hygiene measures. The community also contributes money to people who earn their living every day to avoid gatherings.

The Government continues to have an active advocacy campaign which includes daily TV and radio shows and prevention clips broadcasted, a vocal message spoken before every call, and SMS which provide information about prevention measures and the tool-free number.

**HEALTH** – The Ministry of health launched a revised plan on 30 March stating that the worst-case scenario would be 15K cases in the Republic of Djibouti and has requested a 29 million USD support covering health products, essential logistics, training, epidemiological surveillance and investigation, drug supply, protocol of case management etc.

Health authorities (civilian and military) joined hands to strengthen health control at points of arrival (air/sea/land, including via railway) and set up a quarantine center (hospital Bouffard) and a care center for severe cases (Arta hospital). The Ministry of Health deployed volunteers trained by the National Institute of Public Health of Djibouti (INSPD) and WHO for intra-residential spraying to disinfect in the Makka Elmokkarama district where 11 cases were reported.

On 24 March the Republic of Djibouti has received the Jack Ma and AliBaba Foundations donations including 20,000 testing kits, 100,000 masks, and 1,000 medical use protective suits and face shields.

UNDP supported the Ministry of Urbanization, Environment and Tourism (MUET) with the procurement of personal protective equipment for its staff. UNDP is also supporting the Ministry of health with an Action Plan to address the challenge of the medical waste management through acquisition of incinerators and introduction of an appropriate regulatory framework.

**WASH** - The Ministry of Decentralization organized a coordination meeting with partners on water and sanitation, including handwashing activities, where UNICEF, UNDP and UNFD (National Union of Djiboutian Women) participated. These organizations are providing basic hygiene supplies, setting up hand washing points and carrying out awareness raising in collaboration with the authorities and civil society organizations.
In Boulaos area of Djibouti town, UNDP set up three 1,000-litre tanks, buckets and soaps in the markets frequented by the women, and provided protective equipment and incentives to volunteers. To increase the outreach, UNDP will also provide nine 2,000L water tanks and handwashing supplies to be installed in Einguella, Marché Q7 Bis, Hôpital d’Ambouli, Djebel, Place Mahamoud Harbi Quartier Viet, Quartier 3, Quartier 1, and Quartier 4.

IOM, in collaboration with the local authorities (prefecture, regional council, hospital) and the associations AADO, REEBU and Fantahéro, has placed hand washing stations at checkpoints and various points of interest along the main arteries of the town of Obock. This activity aims to also raise awareness among the host population as well as migrants and refugees on the importance of handwashing in order to prevent this epidemic. This activity is part of the implementation of the awareness-raising activities of the EU-funded Perennial Solutions Programme for the most vulnerable host populations, refugees and migrants on the territory of Djibouti.

A compulsory handwashing system has been set-up at the entrance of Markazi refugee village where all persons entering the site will be subjected. There, the Turkish company responsible for the maintenance of the shelters has disinfected 150 shelters as part of the preventive measures against COVID19.

**FOOD / FOOD SECURITY** – WFP, in coordination with UNHCR and ONARS, is finalizing the food assistance which started on Tuesday 24 March to 18,500 refugees located in the Ali Addeh, Hol Hol and Markazi refugee settlements. In Ali-Addeh, 7 sections out of 8, composed by 10,000 beneficiaries have been assisted with success. Food assistance to 5,100 refugees and asylum seekers in Hol-Hol ended 27 March. WFP is finalizing the food distribution to 1,000 Yemeni refugees, complementing King Salman Foundation (KSF) food distribution in the Markazi refugee settlement. A two-month rations (inkind and cash) are being delivered in order to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID 19. Preventive measures were taken for distribution in accordance with directives from the Ministry of Health, such as the spacing between the distributions and physical distance in order to avoid crowds. In addition, a hand washing system was set up for each individual entering the site, under NRC and Direction Hydraulique Rurale supervision, and protective equipment was distributed to staff. In order to avoid crowds during the distributions, it was decided to make the distribution last eight instead of four days (one distribution day for each section). Prior to distribution, awareness-raising campaigns were carried out with beneficiaries. After consulting the various stakeholders, it was decided to use Master Lists to replace the biometric system (GDT) usually used in order to avoid the spread of a possible infection through the use of biometric equipment.

On 29 March, WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarities (MASS) started a new phase of distribution of vouchers to vulnerable populations affected by the November 2019 floods, for a value of 10,000 FDJ/household to 4,500 households in Djibouti city. These households are among the worst hit by the COVID-19 crisis as well. Staff deliver vouchers door to door to beneficiaries in order to prevent any risk of contagion. To date, 4,000 households received their vouchers to be redeemed at the retailer site to receive food in the various neighborhoods of Djibouti city.

WFP will deliver two months of food in the framework of the Food for Asset creation activities covering the food needs of 6,400 beneficiaries in the 5 regions of Djibouti during the crisis.

On 31 March, IOM conducted a distribution of food and non-food items for the benefit of the 350 migrants currently residing in the Masagara site in Obock, as well as a distribution of non-food items to the 224 migrants living in the Loyada site.
PROTECTION - UNHCR Djibouti launched a protection hotline for refugees and asylum seekers. This hotline allows persons of concern to contact directly UNHCR for any questions related to COVID-19 as well as for protection or assistance concerns. All shared information will be treated confidentially; any referral for a particular service will be made in agreement with the requesting person. Launched to reduce the risks with transportation and to limit the access of UNHCR and/or partners’ offices, this hotline is line with the measures taken to respond to COVID-19.

On 29 March, UNHCR provided a 3-month cash assistance for eight vulnerable refugee families facing health, protection or social difficulties in Djibouti-Ville. In order to best respond to the COVID-19 preventive measures, the beneficiaries received financial assistance for April, May and June so to limit contact as much as possible.

UN PREPAREDNESS – UN entities activated their business continuity plans and are deploying internal resources to contribute to the COVID-19 efforts. Staff, who is largely working remotely, is being kept informed through weekly virtual townhalls. Only critical staff are required at the office.

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