HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,331 cases of COVID-19 and a 4th fatality have been confirmed by authorities in Djibouti to date.
- A Presidential decree details the conditions of a gradual deconfinement starting 17 May.
- Air, sea and land borders for passenger traffic will resume on 1 September. Religious, commercial, transport, secondary and tertiary school and service activities will be subject to strict adherence of distancing and hygiene measures.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- As of 16 May 2020, the Ministry of Health has confirmed 1,331 cases of COVID-19 in Djibouti (22% women). On 14 May, a 60-year-old woman passed away. A total of 4 fatalities in Djibouti since the beginning of the crisis (Case Fatality Rate – CFR 0.3%). On 5 May, screening tests for COVID-19 began in the refugee villages of Ali-Addeh and Holl-Holl ahead of planned monthly distributions.
On 11 May, as part of a gradual deconfinement, the Minister of Higher Education and Research, announced the reopening of the institutions of his ministry as well as private institutions higher education. On 12 May the parliamentary committee to support and monitor the fight against COVID 19 invited a delegation from the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce (CCD). Discussions involved public, para-public and private measures aimed at consolidating economic conditions and the business climate amidst the pandemic.

On 14 May, the United Nations Secretary General called for mental health care support to be provided to millions of people suffering psychological distress from fear, loneliness, economic upheaval and any abuse triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. He launched the UN policy brief, “COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health,” and urged “governments, civil society, health authorities and others to come together urgently to address the mental health dimension of this pandemic” and governments to “announce ambitious commitments on mental health at the upcoming World Health Assembly scheduled for 18-19 May. (Read official statement here).

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

On 12 May, as part of IGAD’s regional response against COVID-19, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Dr Workneh Gebeeyehu, gave personal protective equipment to the refugees living in the Holl-Holl village. He also donated kits of personal protective equipment to people living at the border between Djibouti-Ethiopia and Djibouti-Somalia.

HEALTH – In an effort to counteract global shortages of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), diagnostics and clinical management, WHO launched the global COVID-19 Supply Portal, a purpose-built tool created to facilitate national authorities and partners procurement requests. The COVID-19 Supply Chain System (CSCS) is based on country-based requests for essential supplies which are to be are coordinated at country level and based on the National Action Plans for COVID-19 preparedness and response. Supplies procurement is coordinated through “purchasing consortia” of the major purchasers in each product area to ensure maximum market access while leveraging existing procurement capacity and building on established mechanisms and systems. Allocations of essential supplies are agreed within the purchasing consortia and based on country needs, data on national absorption capacity and gap in unmet supply need. Distribution and transport of supplies are streamlined and supported to ensure efficient delivery.

The technical committee responsible of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Djibouti requested WHO support for its information management system, including for electronic devices for data analysis and interpretation of cases.

UNICEF continues to support MoH in seeking options for strengthening infection prevention and control in health centers (training and equipment) and is facilitating the order of hospital beds requested by USAID on behalf of MoH. The agency has also ordered an additional 1,000 COVID test kits contribute to systematic testing of migrants received in the Ali Sabieh quarantine camp, which will soon become operational and continues to procure vaccines, nutritional inputs and other essential drugs to maintain the supply of essential health and nutrition services to women and children.

WASH – UNICEF continues to expand the network of handwashing stations with soap in the most vulnerable areas of Djibouti, in collaboration with national NGOs and the Djibouti City Hall, and in the regions in partnership with the Ministry of Decentralization. Options to ensure disinfection of schools
before the new are under study, in cooperation with MENFOP with regard to disinfecting educational facilities, before they reopen.

Provisional WASH devices to improve access to water (10m³ capacity bladders), and construction of temporary latrines are being set up in the quarantine site for migrants and ‘land travelers’ in Ali Sabieh region to make the camp immediately operational and ready to welcome migrants. UNICEF is working on construction of more permanent WASH solutions (water point and latrines).

The ongoing partnership between UNICEF and national NGOs (CRD, WID, ADIM, ADSEG) has reached an additional 4,025 people with messages on handwashing with soap and messages on other barrier measures.

**FOOD / FOOD SECURITY** – ONARS, UNHCR and WFP will start food distribution in Ali Addeh and Holl Holl refugee villages on 19 May. The duration of the operation has been extended to ensure optimal distributions flows and minimize risks of contagion. In addition, WFP plans its food assistance to 500 migrants for May for the new migration site of Ali Sabieh. UNICEF contributed to the social assistance system set up by MASS through the transfer of cash to 590 vulnerable households affected by confinement. This effort will continue to reach a total of 5,000 vulnerable households.

The Ambassador of Japan, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and the WFP Country Director launched a humanitarian operation in support of populations affected by the COVID crisis in rural areas and the locusts in Djibouti, which will target 7,000 beneficiaries with “food for asset creation” activities starting June. WFP and MASS are finalizing the beneficiaries list for 6,100 families affected by the COVID crisis and the April flash floods in Djibouti city through a voucher system, which will start on 17 May.

**PROTECTION** – On 13 May, IOM trained 33 question officers from the Gendarmerie working along the migration corridor and in Djibouti city on COVID-19 prevention measures. On 6-12 May, the agency sensitized 2,483 migrants and travelers to the monitoring points of flows in the regions of Ali Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil and Tadjourah. In Obock region, IOM sensitized a total of 498 migrants on the government-run Masagara site and 51 migrants in the town of Obock. IOM distributed non-food items and hygiene kits to 300 migrants on May 12 at the Masagara site.

**EDUCATION** – UNICEF supported MENFOP to set up distance education programs to maintain continuity of education services for children during confinement. Around 53,000 schoolchildren are targeted by this initiative and 10,000 of the most vulnerable schoolchildren now have access to online education thanks to improved access to digital systems. UNICEF also supported MENFOP to develop a sectoral response plan to COVID-19 in coordination with the World Bank for better mobilization of GPE funds and financial partners.
COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY – Agencies continue to provide support for risk communication activities by intensifying the identification of rumors and their correction in social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram).

The COVID-19 challenge, organized thanks to the partnership of UNDP and UNICEF with CLE, has brought together 37 innovative projects that provide solutions with immediate technological and/or social impact in order to contribute to the fight against COVID-19. Six projects won a financial prize as well as support to help them implement their project aiming at having a short-term impact in response to the crisis.

To promote access to information related to covid19, UNDP supported CTID in the development of a new Chatbot that provides valuable advice on the Coronavirus in local languages on WhatsApp.

FUNDING

The European Union is providing €105.5 million to countries in the Horn of Africa, including €500,000 to Djibouti, as the coronavirus pandemic risks worsening the humanitarian situation across the region where many continue to suffer from armed conflict, displacement, and recurrent droughts and floods.

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