

## Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

Following the confirmation of the first positive case of COVID-19 in Gabon on March 12, there are currently 276 confirmed cases of COVID-19 recorded in Gabon as of April 29<sup>th</sup>, 67 cases have been discharged with 3 deaths recorded. A total number of 742 persons of interest (POI) are being identified and monitored, out of which, 93 per cent are confined in their homes, and the rest in isolation sites managed by the Government. As at 24 April 2,319 tests have been carried out across the country with only 1,302 reported results; this signalled lags in the testing system and capacity within the Country. Early demographics of the COVID-19 two weeks ago showed a pattern where at least 7 children were among the positive cases, 60% of confirmed cases were women, and the 34% of cases were medical personals. While Libreville has remained the main hotspot, the coronavirus has now spread to 4 out of 9 provinces, with one of them bordering Cameroon from where cases were imported. While the total number of confirmed cases almost doubled in the last week, the Government has rolled back some of the stringent measures imposed including the lockdown of the Libreville metropolitan area which has been effective for two weeks, and the progressive resumption of economic activities. The ease on the restriction of movement within the metropolitan area in a context of growing number of confirmed cases, could suggest significant limitations to the coping measures including food vouchers, and other economic relief for the poorest and workers in the informal sector. The latter could further exacerbate the pressure to uphold preventive measures and respond to socio-economic impact of the COVID-19.

In line with its response plan, UNICEF Gabon alongside WHO continues to support the Government in risk communication/community engagement (RCCE), infection prevention and control (IPC), supply and logistics, and healthcare provision. In addition, the CO is closely working with UNESCO, AFD in support to the Ministry of Education for the continuity of education. In the area of child protection, UNICEF is working with both the Government and the civil society organizations to ensure the continuity of protective services to children in transit centres and prisons. High level advocacy efforts with the parliamentarians and other local authorities are underway to help reduce the adverse effect of the COVID-19 on children and women.

### Situation in Numbers



276 COVID-19 confirmed cases

03 deaths



400,000 Children affected by COVID-19 school closures



US\$ 750,000 funding required

## UNICEF's COVID-19 response

### Health

As of date, the health personal made up to the third of confirmed cases in Gabon, which raised the issue of their protection. UNICEF is working with the Government to increase support to the health personal through purchasing and distribution of PPEs. In addition, UNICEF is assisting the Government in an in-depth need assessment of health centres to ensure health staff are equipped and protected for continuity of routine Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent (MNCAH) services. Advocacy and continuous support has been given to further prevent disruption of routine immunization services in health districts with the lowest coverage.

Furthermore, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health are working closely to ensure all health facilities receive and use the operational guidance on essential MNCAH

services and ensure the training of their personal to handle safe delivery in the context of the COVID-19. Finally, UNICEF is advocating at high level to prevent the disruption of the interoperable service delivery for birth registration with the health system.

### WASH

As member of IPC commission, UNICEF actively collaborated with WHO on the assessment of WASH and IPC measures needs in healthcare facilities and isolation sites. Building on its recent investment on WASH in prisons, hospitals and transit centres hosting migrant children victim of trafficking, UNICEF has leveraged its support to reach 3,500 peoples with critical supplies and services, including hand washing stations, hygiene items. UNICEF support will further increase as a result of the collaboration with the municipality of Libreville who will support the provision of handwashing stations and hygiene items to more 70,000 people living in slums and hard to reach places.

## **RCCE/C4D**

In addition to its support to the Government efforts on RCCE, UNICEF mobilized local NGOs to integrate awareness raising in their activities. Further to this, a consortium of seven local NGOs supported by UNICEF partnered with the national broadcasting radio (RTG), on a weekly programme aired nationwide to sensitize and to raise awareness on preventive measures and behaviour on COVID-19, continuity of essential MNCAH including vaccination and birth registration, child rights, violence against children and GBV in the context of the COVID-19 and on Essential Family Practices. Following the first broadcast of this series of radio programme that will last three months, more than 3,000 people engaged digitally on the RTG social media pages. In addition to the collaboration with the national broadcasting, UNICEF has engaged with a network of community radio (ARCEG) with outreach in 8 provinces. Over the next three months, this partnership will help broadcasting weekly interactive programmes, and to engage local authorities and key influencers in the fight against COVID-19, the promotion of child rights, KRCs, the continuity of demand and access to services.

## **Education**

UNICEF is collaboratively working with UNESCO, AFD and OIF to provide technical and financial assistance to the Ministry of Education for stepping up learning through home-based platforms such as radio and television, and Government owned online platform X-GET. Only secondary school children preparing national examination are included in the first phase of the continuity of learning. Data on attendance is not available. In parallel of this initiative, UNICEF and partners are supporting the Government in developing a comprehensive strategy for distance learning covering the needs of all school children. In addition, UNICEF will be leading the subcommittee in charge of planning the re-opening of schools.

## **Child protection**

UNICEF advocated for the liberation of children in detention, and for alternative measures to the detention. As a result, 20 children whose jail terms was lesser than 6 months have all been released. However, more than 200 children remained in prisons, with 70% in pre-trial detention. UNICEF is supporting the Central prison of Libreville through WASH and hygiene items. More than 100 children without parental and family care (in transit centres in Libreville) comprising children victims of neglect, abandonment, sexual exploitation, cross-border trafficking or children living in street have received alternative care and psychosocial support. More than 100 COVID-19 prevention IEC materials were delivered to child protection centres. In addition, UNICEF is working with local NGOs on the tracing and reunification of children living in streets.

In line with its commitment to Key Results for Children (KRC) on prevention of violence and birth registration, UNICEF has increased communication through mass media and advocacy efforts in the wider context of COVID-19. Weekly radio programmes addressed the issue of violence against children during the confinement. The Country Office is collaborating with the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs to activate a free-toll number (Child Help Line) for the management and referral of cases of Violence against children (VAC) and Gender Based Violence.

Furthermore, UNICEF has engaged high level advocacy for provisional measures on birth registration. In a context where the legal time frame for birth registration is 3 days, it is feared the disruption resulting from the COVID19 could further deprive children of their right to citizenship.

## Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

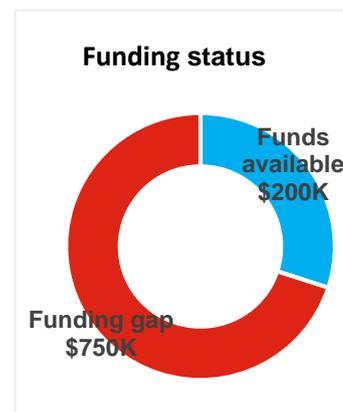
With a share of 34% of all positive cases recorded and 66% of fatality rate, the protection and commitment of health staff is key to ensure an effective response to COVID-19, and to the continuity of essential MNCAH services. UNICEF Gabon will direct nearly all its PPE supply to medical staff and social protection workers beyond the case-management and isolation centres that have been prioritized by the Government. In anticipation of the restriction of the mobility between provinces, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health to pre-position essential drugs including vaccines and other medical equipment in the field. With consideration to street children, UNICEF Child Protection is collaborating with local NGOs for family tracing and reunification; psychosocial support will target both parents, families and street children as well. In the context of COVID-19, the CO has re-purposed part of the funding from the Joint Programme on Social Protection to support extended RCCE activities and continuity of services for hard to reach populations including the indigenous peoples. The COVID-19 by its nature and impact on the education systems and its requirements for WASH, has exposed the weaknesses of the current country programme structure where neither education, nor WASH are stand-alone programme components; the office will leverage its capacity in WASH and Education to meet the expectations.

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

During the reporting period, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Global Thematic Funds for Education, and the Global Funds for Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV-AIDS, contributed to UNICEF Gabon COVID-19 response plan. The requirements of the response plan amount to USD 750K, out of which USD 200K have available.

## External Media

UNICEF Country sponsored a radio programme featuring leading local NGOs on the effect of COVID-19 on child rights.



\* Funds available includes funding received against current appeal as well as carry-forward from previous year.

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## Summary of Programme Results

Sector	UNICEF and IPs Response	
	2020 target	Total results*
<b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</b>		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	700,000	70,000
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/ clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	2,000	-
<b>WASH and IPC</b>		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	70,000	3,500
<b>Health</b>		
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	300	-
<b>Nutrition</b>		
-	-	-
<b>Education</b>		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	300,000	-
Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	500	-
<b>Child Protection and GBV</b>		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	1,000	300
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support <sup>3</sup>	10,000	100
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	300	-
Number of UNICEF personnel and partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation and referrals for survivors	30	-
<b>Social Protection</b>		
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs	-	-

## Annex B

### Funding Status\*

Sector	Funding requirements	Funds available	Funding gap \$	Gap %
C4D / RCCE	150,000	40,000	110,000	73%
WASH & IPC	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%
Health	70,000		70,000	100%
Child Protection	110,000	50,000	60,000	55%
Education	180,000	70,000	110,000	61%
HIV/AIDS	40,000	30,000	10,000	25%
Technical Support, Operational Cost, Coordination, M&E	100,000	-	-	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>550,000</b>	<b>73%</b>