



## COVID-19 Update 1:

### United Nations Support to the Government of Ghana

#### Introduction

Ghana reported its first two cases of COVID-19 on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, leading to the activation of national response mechanisms. Among them, a number of directives and control measures issued by the President to prevent further importation of cases and local transmission. These included: travel restrictions (with the exception of Ghanaians and those with resident permits), a restrictions on mass gatherings including funerals and churches, schools and borders closure, quarantine and testing and a partial lockdown in several districts and municipalities in Greater Accra and the Greater Kumasi.

#### Situation Update :

**Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases as at 22nd April 2020: 1,154 (GHS)**

#### UN in Ghana Response Interventions

The UN Country Team (UNCT) in Ghana is collectively supporting the Government of Ghana (GoG) COVID-19 response, prioritizing support in addressing the immediate public health emergency, while at the same time starting to address the wide-ranging socio-economic impact of the pandemic. The UNCT has rapidly dedicated/re-programmed its available resources to support health and non-health sector response efforts as outlined in this bulletin.

While WHO has been the lead UN agency providing technical support to the Government on COVID-19 preparedness and response, several other UN agencies are actively contributing their expertise in addressing the immediate public health needs. As a result, the UN has developed a draft Country Response and Preparedness Plan (CPRP) that presents a consolidated plan to support the GoG's response in eight key broad pillars:

- ◆ Country-level coordination, planning, and monitoring
- ◆ Gender-sensitive risk communication and community engagement
- ◆ Surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation
- ◆ Points of Entry
- ◆ National laboratories
- ◆ Infection prevention and control
- ◆ Case management; and
- ◆ Operational support and logistics.

#### Key highlights

- ◆ WHO donated two consignments of laboratory supplies to Noguchi to facilitate sample collection and testing and deployed a technical expert from the WHO Africa Regional Office to support preparedness coordination activities.
- ◆ WFP enhanced Social Behaviour Change Communication on prevention of COVID-19 at all commodity redemption centers for the stunting prevention programme.
- ◆ UNICEF, together with partners, has supported Ghana Health Service to strengthen the public health laboratory in Tamale, thereby making a third testing center available.
- ◆ Ghana Statistical Service in partnership with UNDP has deployed a tracker to measure the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses and border economies, and identify recovery pathways. UNFPA collaborated with Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) to secure a 24/7 hotline to support response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases.

#### Country -level coordination, planning and monitoring

WHO deployed a technical expert from the WHO Africa Regional Office to support COVID-19 preparedness coordination activities. In addition, WHO continues to provide technical support for coordination meetings of the Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service emergency operation center, planning meetings and workshops and development of preparedness and response plans.

#### Gender-sensitive risk communication and community engagement

UN agencies continue to develop and disseminate information materials on COVID-19 hygiene protocols. WHO supports risk communication technical coordination meetings to validate content for material development and give updates on risk communication activities at the national level. In addition to that, WHO supported content development for pocket cards as well as broadcast and TV documentaries and informercials on COVID-19. Broadcast and TV documentaries, and informercials are being translated into eight local languages. UNICEF is also supporting with the production of information material including short films highlighting preventive and protection measures.

#### Surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation

WHO supported the Ministry of Health/GHS to develop tools, guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for case detection, contact tracing and surveillance. Periodic reviews have been done. In addition, WHO supported the training of Rapid Response Teams (RRT)

members consisting of District Directors of Health Service, Clinicians, Laboratory Scientists, Surveillance and Health Promotion Officers, and Point of Entry staff (including port health, immigration and customs officers) from high risk districts in Volta and Greater Accra Regions to enhance skills in COVID-19 surveillance, rapid response and contact identification/tracing. Other participants included the Deputy Directors of Public Health, Clinician, Biomedical Scientist, Infection Prevention and Control Officer and Veterinary Officers from the regional level.

WHO continues to support Ministry of Health/GHS in community-based surveillance, home visits and contact tracing as well as national coordination for contact tracing of suspected cases.

### National Laboratories

WHO donated two consignments of laboratory supplies to Noguchi to facilitate sample collection and testing for COVID-19 and continues to provide technical guidance for laboratory activities.

UNICEF, together with partners has supported Ghana Health Service in strengthening the public health laboratory in Tamale, thereby making a third COVID-19 testing center available.

### Case Management

WHO provided Coverall-Dupont Tyvek, Re-usable Goggles, Respirators N-95, Surgical Face Masks, Gynecological gloves, Rubber Aprons for treatment centers, Gum-boots, examination gloves, scrubs and related medication. In addition, WHO supported the development of case management SOPs, Guidelines and Algorithms. In addition, WHO, with support from DFID deployed an international consultant to provide technical guidance on case management.

### Socio-economic response

In order to identify responsive mitigation measures to socio-economic impacts, Ghana Statistical Service in partnership with UNDP, has deployed a tracker to better understand how COVID-19 is affecting businesses and border economies.

On food security, WFP is supporting MoFA/SRID to enhance market price and food security monitoring. UNICEF, together with partners is supporting the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to prepare advance payments for 322,000 households under the LEAP programme.

With regards to education, WFP and UNICEF are providing technical assistance to the Ghana School Feeding Programme to identify possible emergency response in relation to the current containment measures. UNICEF continues to provide technical advice on the operationalization of remote, home-based continuous learning.

As emphasis is being placed on hand washing and other hygiene measures, WFP and UNICEF have provided Tippy taps and Veronica buckets respectively in various locations to facilitate proper hand washing.



*A girl using a Tippy-Tap to wash her hands (UNICEF)*



*One of the Veronica Buckets provided by WFP*

In addition, UNFPA partnered with the Rebecca foundation and PAYDP to donate a number of dignity kits comprising sanitary pads, hand sanitizers, soap/detergents, face masks, toilet papers, toothbrushes and toothpaste in order to ensure that female migrant workers particularly head porters ('Kayayei') are able to access sanitary products and observe appropriate menstrual and personal hygiene. This intervention will be ongoing for the duration of the 'restricted movement' period during the pandemic.

In order to effectively respond to Gender Based Violence cases in the context of COVID-19, UNFPA collaborated with Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) to secure a 24/7 hotline to support response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases that are likely to surge given the present circumstances. This service will run beyond the COVID-19 outbreak to weather post-pandemic incidents as they relate to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, UNFPA supported the DOVVSU at the Ghana Police Service in Paga, Upper East Region with data capturing equipment to enhance their work in preventing and responding to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence cases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sexual and Reproductive Health needs of persons living with disabilities need to be integrated into the Country's emergency response, especially during the COVID\_19 pandemic. It is in this regard that UNFPA published a press release to highlight their needs and create awareness on the need to have responsive measures integrated in the country's emergency response.