



## COVID-19 Update: 4

### United Nations Support to the Government of Ghana

#### Situation Update (26 August, 2020)

#### Regional distribution of COVID-19 cases—26 August 2020

Region	Confirmed cases	Recoveries/Discharge	Proportion (%) recovered/discharged	Deaths	Active Cases	Proportion of Active cases per region
Greater Accra	21,664	21,064	97.1	92	528	31.7
Ashanti	10,763	10,286	95.6	91	386	23.2
Central	1,949	1,923	98.5	14	272	16.3
Eastern	2,224	1,943	87.3	19	260	15.6
Western	2,847	2,871	97.4	4	72	4.3
Ahaho	496	448	90.3	0	48	2.9
Bono East	749	697	93.1	11	41	2.5
Volta	656	615	93.8	11	30	1.8
Oti	229	205	89.5	2	22	1.3
Northern	497	483	97.2	11	3	0.2
Western North	598	596	99.7	0	2	0.1
Bono	480	480	100.0	0	0	0.0
North East	18	17	94.4	1	0	0.0
Savannah	62	61	98.4	1	0	0.0
Upper East	282	279	98.9	3	0	0.0
Upper West	58	55	94.8	3	0	0.0
National	43,622	41,695	95.6	263	1,664	100.0

KEY POINTS	
Table 1: Confirmed cases, recoveries, active cases and deaths.	
New Cases	117
Range of new cases	2 - 60
Number of regions reporting	6
Total confirmed Cases from routine Surveillance	17,008
Total confirmed cases from enhanced surveillance (contact tracing, quarantined travelers)	26,614
Cumulative confirmed cases	43,622
Total number of deaths among confirmed cases	263
Cumulative Recoveries	41,695
Active cases	1,664

#### UN in Ghana Response Interventions

To help inform the Government and other Development Partners, the United Nations (UN) in Ghana issues this monthly bulletin, a consolidated summary of information on activities and response support to the Government of Ghana. The activities span across nine pillars and this edition covers June and July 2020.

It is worth noting that the UN Country Team (UNCT), since the first cases of COVID-19, continues to provide support collectively to the Government of Ghana through its expertise and resourcefulness to respond to both the Public Health Emergency as well as the immediate socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

#### Country level co-ordination, planning and monitoring

Having regular, instead of ad-hoc meetings to coordinate activities improve efficiency and accountability in implementation of response activities. In light of this, WHO continues to support the Government to hold bi-weekly National Technical Coordinating Committee (NTCC) meetings and weekly Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC) meetings. These platforms are helping to collectively identify gaps and solutions while ensuring ownership by the stakeholders and appropriate use of resources.

In a meeting of Regional Directors of Health Services to strategize on public health measures aimed at addressing setbacks from easing of restrictions, WHO outlined the new guidelines for discharge of COVID-19 patients in containment and also provided technical guidance. Following the meeting recommendation, the Ghana Health Service adapted the new WHO discharge criteria pushing the proportion of discharges from <35% to >85%,

#### Key Highlights

- WHO outlines the new guidelines for discharge of COVID-19 patients in containment to Regional Directors of Health Services for adoption.
- WHO in collaboration with WFP and UNOSSC develop guidelines on the management of travellers arriving on WFP flights (roles and responsibilities and protocols for COVID-19 testing and management) under the WFP Global Aviation Passenger Service.
- Ghana Health Services, with support from UNDP, develop COVID-19 prevention messages in Braille and sign language.
- UNICEF supports refurbishment of the Kumasi Public Health Reference Laboratory for COVID-19 testing.
- WFP continues life saving activities in partnership with the Government of Ghana through the Ghana Health Service by providing nutritious vitamin and mineral fortified cereal-based foods to improve health outcomes.

and also reducing the case burden at isolation/treatment centres, turnaround time and cost of care.

As the pandemic rages on, guidelines are critical to ensure compliance and containment of the pandemic. WHO in collaboration with WFP and UNOSSC have developed guidelines on the management of travellers arriving on WFP flights (roles and responsibilities and protocols for COVID-19 testing and management) under the WFP Global Aviation Passenger Service. This is to help safeguard the travellers against COVID-19 and mitigate the risk of infection spread while in transit or under quarantine in Ghana.

Within this reporting period, the UN in Ghana, through different Agencies, have strengthened the capacity of Government staff across different fields and areas to appropriately respond to the pandemic.

ILO, with support from its International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, made available a short training course (6-weeks) on Labour Migration Governance to help strengthen the capacity of Government Stakeholders to protect migrant workers from the risks of contracting COVID-19. The training is likely to accelerate the call for relevant legislation for the protection of migrant workers (C181, C143 and 189).

FAO on the other hand provided capacity building support to farmers in Dormaa Ahinkrom on how to deal with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the poultry sector and also on personal hygiene and farm biosecurity. This will benefit the farmers by the adaption of mitigation measures to sustain production and marketing of poultry and poultry products to promote food

security and livelihoods amidst COVID-19 and also to build resilience for sustained food production and improved livelihoods and public health.

Meanwhile, UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to draft a Strategic National COVID-19 Response Plan to cover the period of July 2020 to December 2021.

### Gender-sensitive risk communication and community engagement

Making sure no one is left behind is core to the operations of the UN and as the pandemic continues, deliberate programmes are designed and targeted at the marginalized to ensure an all inclusive intervention.

UNESCO provided support through the CIVI-CARE Project to engage young people to use their talents to solve problems through a series of activities and initiatives. On Nelson Mandela Day in July, youth with visual impairment participated in a musical performance. Tapping into Mandela's resilience making reference to his quotes "it is in your hands to make our world a better one for all", the occasion was used to sensitize participants on the proper use of nose mask, physical/social distance, care for the cloth or re-usable masks and hand hygiene. The youth was also encouraged to use their creative talents to solve problems during the Pandemic and Beyond.

UNDP supported the Ghana Health Service to develop COVID-19 prevention messages in Braille and sign language to ensure that people with disability are included in the sensitization drive to help contain the virus and that they have the requisite information to protect themselves and their families.

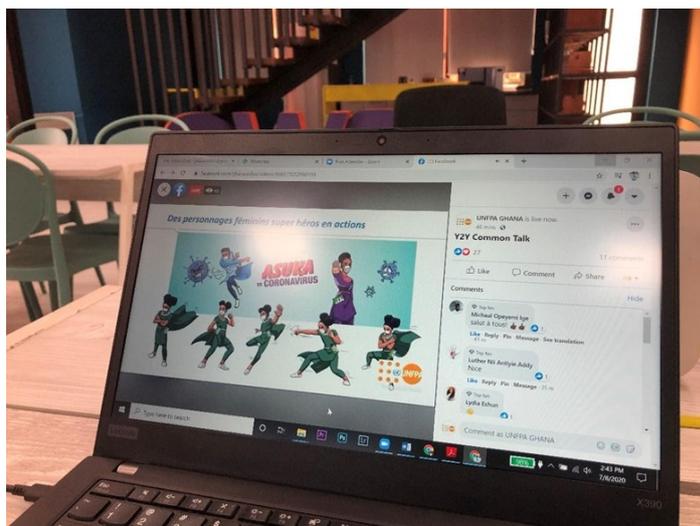
UNFPA supported the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisation with dignity kits including 700 adapted dignity kits for both males and females. In terms of sensitizing members on COVID-19 precautionary measures and SGBV/SRHR/FP, communication package containing COVID-19 related risk mitigation materials were provided.

As part of activities to launch the State of the World Population report and in observance of the World Population Day, UNFPA collaborated with its sister agencies in Togo and Benin to hold a joint inter-country event dubbed "Y2Y Common Talk: Amplifying innovation and the voices of young girls in the fight against COVID-19" where young people were engaged to help them combat misinformation and xenophobia around COVID-19. Additionally, traditional leaders were reached, through TV networks to heighten their role as fore-runners to end SGBV and harmful practices.

### Surveillance, rapid response teams and case investigation

Surveillance is key to containing the virus and the various UN

agencies continue to support the Government of Ghana to build a robust surveillance system to appropriately respond and contain the virus.



Some digital innovations to combat COVID-19 shared by young people during the Youth2Youth Common Talk organized by UNFPA

WHO supported the Government of Ghana to train 33 Health Information Officers (HIOs) and 10 regional COVID-19 data officers in Greater Accra on usage of a surveillance software, SORMAS, to help step up the surveillance effort and COVID-19 data management. This is helping to make COVID-19 related data available in a timely manner for analysis and critical decision making.

FAO provided technical support for training lecturers and students of some selected Universities (Veterinary Schools of University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the Pharmacy department of KNUST and University of Cape Coast). The training on One Health and priority zoonotic diseases, also covered COVID 19 surveillance and rapid response. This training provided the lecturers with enhanced capacity in priority zoonotic diseases as pre-training services to prepare students on the practical importance of One Health.



Following the training on the SORMAS software, a district health staff at Shai Osudoku is supported to track surveillance data online

## Points of Entry

The development of a systematic plan for COVID-19 specific response interventions at the Points of Entries (PoEs) in readiness for the opening of borders is critical. In light of this, WHO joined a meeting of stakeholders from International Health Regulations National Focal Point (IHR NFP) and IOM to provide technical assistance on how to strategize and develop a plan to augment the capacity of PoE staff to manage COVID-19 related response activities at PoEs. Priority areas of interventions to be implemented were identified. They include SOPs for PoEs, WASH facility and training needs of Port Health and other PoE staff as well as roles and responsibilities of respective agencies. This will help equip the PoEs with the requisite resources and safety measures to safeguard travellers and reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection transmission.

## National Laboratories

The fight against the pandemic to some extent depends on the testing capabilities of a country. The UN in Ghana therefore continues to support the Government of Ghana to improve its testing capabilities to ramp up testing. WHO provided support for supportive monitoring visit to NMIMR, FAO provided technical assistance to capacity strengthening and development of SOPs in veterinary laboratories on COVID-19 and UNICEF refurbished the Kumasi Public Health Reference Laboratory for COVID-19 Testing.

To help improve data transmission between surveillance and laboratory teams, WHO supported national monitoring effort by training 6 Laboratory staff on SORMAS usage and barcode system to help reduce time lost due to laborious double data entry processes at the laboratories and improve reporting.

FAO provided technical assistance to the training of 30 Laboratory staff on Core Testing of Priority Zoonotic Diseases, including COVID-19. The three veterinary laboratories in Accra, Takoradi and Central Region had their capacities strengthened and can now effectively and efficiently support the public health labs in COVID 19 testing.

FAO also provided technical assistance to the development/review of veterinary laboratories SOPs/Guidelines on COVID-19. This has provided systematic guidance to the process of testing in veterinary laboratories to conform with the procedures in COVID 19 testing at public health labs.

To improve regional COVID-19 testing and diagnosis capacities, UNICEF has supported the refurbishment of the Kumasi Public Health Reference Laboratory and has provided laboratory consumables to enhance safety.

## Infection prevention and control

To help Ghana develop national quality standards for reference in the acquisition of hand sanitizers and relevant COVID-



*WHO team members validating sample information entry in SORMAS using the barcode system at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR)*

19 protective items such as PPEs, UNIDO has supported the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) to develop Relevant National Standards. These cover products such as IPC and PPEs; hand sanitizers, face masks, face shield and gloves. UNIDO also supported GSA to train local manufacturers of hand sanitizers and face masks on the use of the developed standards.

ILO supported efforts to strengthen the capacities of hotels and SMEs/industries on methods and protocols to follow to remain safe at the work place. Training on strategies for business continuity during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, business digitalization and e-commerce in response to COVID-19, and risk assessment for COVID-19 at the workplace and work place safety measures were provided. Checklist for hand hygiene, physical/social distancing, cleaning, and protection procedures for Covid-19 were developed to help with sensitization. Posters on COVID-19 protection protocols were also developed for SMEs and hospitality sector to support with the risk communication. All these are aimed at reducing COVID-19 infections at the workplace/industry to help welcome customers back safely in hotels and restaurants.

## Case management

Effective case management positively impacts on case recovery and reduces mortalities especially those in containment centres.

WHO sponsored and provided technical assistance for the assessment and supportive supervisory visits to 49 COVID-19 case management treatment/isolation centres across the 16 regions of the country to ensure case management aligns with WHO set standards (SOPs) and guidelines. The assessment identified gaps in human resource and logistics of all 49 treatment/isolation centres and also made available information for decision making on improvement and standardisation of services/operations at the treatment/isolation centres. The findings from the assessment would enable resource mobilization to address the training and equipment gaps to improve case management. About 85 critical care nurses/doctors have since the assessment been identified for immediate training to fill some of the human resource gaps identified.

## Supportive Social Service

Social services serve as life line for most people especially the vulnerable population and so it is important that social services are not discontinued if we are to win the COVID-19 fight. In view of this, the UN is ensuring all life saving social services or activities are continued. Several agencies have undertaken various to support national social services strategies.

UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja received approval of \$620,000 Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant to support COVID-19 education response in five Anglophone countries in West Africa. Ghana will directly benefit from this GPE grant in its COVID-19 Education response in the areas of capacity building for Teacher Educators in the delivery of online lessons as well as linking the Government Global Education Coalition members for support.

UNESCO, with funding support from the Norwegian Government through the Norwegian Teacher Initiative is also undertaking consultation with key stakeholders on the draft Comprehensive National Teacher Policy and the draft Teacher Deployment and Transfer Strategy aimed to help address the constraints of teacher deployment in the country. Feedback from stakeholder consultation will also take into account emergency responses and how Teachers can be best supported to ensure effective teaching during emergencies like COVID 19.

WFP is providing nutritious vitamin and mineral fortified cereal-based foods to improve health outcomes of selected vulnerable groups including 29,109 women and children. More than one million servings of fully fortified cereal-based foods were provided in addition to 33,800 kg of vegetable oil and 8,455 kg of iodised salt. Rations for two months were combined to re-



Adolescent girls being registered by GHS staff in Zabzugu

duce contact whilst important behavioural change messaging as well as covid-19 messaging were provided. The programme is helping to prevent and/or reduce stunting and the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

WFP also introduced the adolescent girl nutrition intervention component of the stunting prevention programme as part of

efforts to addressing the triple burden of malnutrition in Ghana during the reporting period. This intervention is aimed at breaking the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition as young people especially the adolescent girls are susceptible to malnutrition as a result of unhealthy eating habits or limited access to accurate nutrition information. Biometric registration of this category of beneficiaries started in June in partnership with GHS and expected to cover 5,000 adolescent girls out of school in some selected districts in the North (Northern, Savannah and North East) and Ashanti regions. So far, 1,358 adolescent girls have been registered with their biometric details.

UNFPA, as part of commitment to support the Government of Ghana and civil society groups in the mitigation of the effects of COVID-19, carried out donation exercises to some institutions and marginalised population. UNFPA together with its partners (Ecobank Ghana and Tobinco group) presented 300 Dignity Kits and PPEs to the students of Tetteh Ocloo State School for the Deaf at Ashaiman. They also presented 500 hygiene kits for girls, 200 hygiene kits for boys and 500 non-perishable food packs containing beverages, canned fish and biscuits to the Senior Correctional Centre and Young People living with HIV. In addition to the dignity kits and PPEs, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on adolescent sexual and reproductive health were also provided to hearing-impaired young people.

Frontline health workers were not left out as UNFPA supported the Mercy Women's Catholic Hospital in Mankessim with dignity kits and PPEs. The PPEs were to support and protect health workers as they provide essential health care to citizens. The dignity kits were also presented to encourage mothers to continue seeking maternal health services, whilst protecting themselves from Coronavirus. 20 hospital personnel



A new mother benefiting from a dignity kit at the maternity ward of Mercy Women's Catholic Hospital in Mankessim

had tested positive to COVID-19 from the onset of the pandemic, and the hospital had been in dire need of PPEs. A total of 237 PPEs and 50 Dignity Kits were presented to the hospital.

UNFPA Ghana within the reporting period also designed and implemented the Kayaye Assistance Project (KASPRO) with

support from Prudential Life Insurance Ghana and the National Health Insurance Scheme. The project uses effective and workable approaches in addressing the needs of the Kayayei during and after the pandemic. It also seeks to protect Kayayei from infections, including COVID19, STIs, and also provides them with access to health care services especially sexual and reproductive health services, and subsequently reduce their vulnerability to SGBV and Harmful practices.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, sensitized Refugees and Asylum Seekers in four refugee camps about the COVID-19 pandemic and the safety protocols, while encouraging refugees to contribute their quota to support prevention and response efforts.

UNHCR also donated some food items to refugees in the camps as well as those in the urban areas to help improve their nutritional status and help boost their immune system and help reduce their risk of infections.



*Interaction with staff at the Winneba Trauma and Specialist Hospital during the Case Management Assessment visit*



*A section of participants at a workshop organized by UNHCR*

In times like this, vulnerable populations become more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse. In light of this, UNHCR organized a workshop on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for field-based Partners and Leaders of the Refugee Council. The workshop which was held in the Berekum West District of the Bono Region was to build their capacity to help prevent and effectively respond to issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. The aim is to ensure that refugees and their host communities remain safe from sexual exploitation and abuse while receiving humanitarian aid, including health services and treatment, and during this COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF supported the Ghana Health Service to finalise and print RMNCAHN guidelines on continuation of essential services and IE&C materials. A total of two hundred (200) national/regional programme officers have since been given orientation on how to use it at the national level. Sub-regional level orientation and SBCC activities have started and ongoing.