

COVID-19 Update

Date	Updated on 27 th March 2020
Situation Update	No. 2

1. MALAWI HIGHLIGHTS

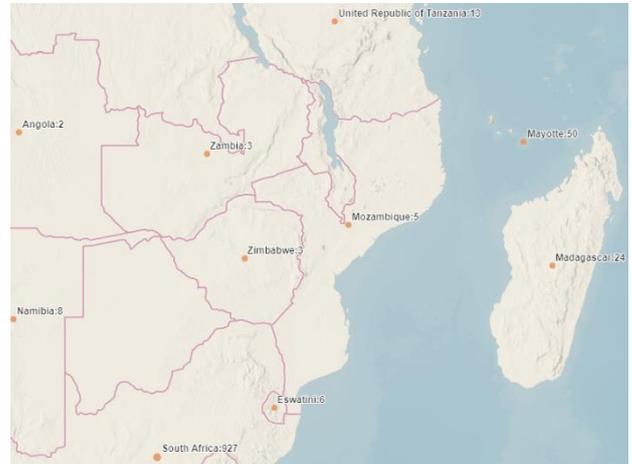
- ❖ No detected COVID-19 case confirmed
- ❖ Preparations and prevention initiatives are underway
- ❖ Government and UN coordination structures in place
- ❖ State of disaster and national prevention/response measures announced

2. GLOBAL UPDATE

- ❖ **509,164** COVID-19 cases confirmed
- ❖ **23,335** confirmed deaths
- ❖ **202** countries, areas and territories have cases

3. REGIONAL UPDATE (Africa)

- ❖ **2,509** COVID-19 cases confirmed in **39** countries
- ❖ **42** confirmed deaths
- ❖ **73** recovered



*Dots show countries with cases. Source: WHO
Figures by WHO as of 27 March 2020, 18:31 GMT+2*

4. MALAWI GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

4.1 Malawi Preparedness and Response Plan

- Malawi President declared State of Disaster on 20th March due to COVID-19 threat;
- Malawi Government has developed a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, with a budget of \$28 million;
- Malawi Government has provided MK2.5 billion (about \$3.4 million) for response;
- The World Bank is in discussion with the Ministry of Health to support the response, in particular with training, procurement of essential supplies and medicines;
- The First Lady launched the COVID-19 awareness campaign called Beautify Malawi Trust for Vigilance on 27 March;
- DfID and the Global Fund have contributed £1.7 million and £389,000, respectively;
- UN is providing technical support on COVID-19 preparedness to Ministry of Health and other government partners.

4.2 Laboratory Capacity

- Laboratory testing for COVID-19 is available at the Common Health Sciences Unit (CHSU) and College of Medicine in Lilongwe and Blantyre respectively;
- Government reports that CHSU has capacity to do 96 COVID-19 tests in 2 hours;
- Suspected COVID-19 cases have been tested and all were negative;
- WHO and Africa CDC have procured reagents for the COVID-19 testing machine;
- Government is working to equip other laboratories with COVID-19 testing capacity in the North of the country;
- Malawi has received a consignment of 20,000 test kits from the Jack Ma Foundation.

4.3 Preventative measures instituted by Malawian Government (all measures at 27 March)

4.3.1 Travel and Transport Sector

- All cross-border passenger travel has been suspended;
- Restrictions on public transport services have been announced:
- All passenger vessels on Lake Malawi have been restricted to carry only 50 percent of the capacity;
- All public service vehicles have been restricted to carrying only up to 60 percent of full capacity;
- No animals are allowed in public service vehicles;
- Private vehicles are restricted to carrying only 2 passengers on the back seats;
- Tricycles to reduce number of passengers from 2 to 1;
- Measures for bicycles and motorcycle taxis are being developed;
- People with common flu are not allowed on public transport;
- No passengers should stand in minibuses and buses
- All passengers in public service vehicles must wash hands before boarding or use hand sanitizers;
- People are encouraged to walk where possible instead of using public transport and only take essential travel;
- Traffic officers are not allowed to touch vehicle documents, unless where very necessary
- All international flights are suspended except for health personnel, emergencies, returning residents and cargo
- Visas to citizens of highly affected countries are suspended until further notice;

- The general public is advised to avoid non-essential travel to affected countries;
- Roadblocks will be used to check on people's movements;
- Social visits to ports and vessels suspended

4.3.2 Prisons

- Government screening all prisoners to identify those suitable for pardon. The focus is on those who are sick, elderly, breastfeeding, young or who have served a large part of their sentence;
- Government is identifying additional institutional spaces where some prisoners can be transferred;
- Group visits to prisons are suspended. One person will be allowed at a time and only on weekends;
- Prison workers are being provided with supplies to help prevent infections;

4.3.3 Gatherings, Meetings and Schools

- Hosting of international meetings is suspended;
- All schools, colleges and universities were directed to close by 23 March;
- Public servants are banned from attending meetings and activities hosted by affected countries;
- All public gatherings are restricted to less than 100 people, including weddings, funerals, church, congregations, rallies, and government meetings.

4.3.4 Screening and Quarantining

- Self or institutional quarantine for all residents and nationals returning from affected countries;
- Health personnel are being redeployed to conduct screening and surveillance of people at all entry points into the country;
- About 3,127 travelers who travelled from COVID-19 affected countries are under follow-up procedures by the Ministry of Health;

4.4 Communication

- Toll-free number 54747 is in place for more information on COVID-19;
- Messages on COVID-19 in English and Chichewa have been developed and are being shared;
- Comprehensive Integrated Communication Plan is being prepared by the Crisis Management Communication Committee;
- The Crisis Management Communication Committee will provide weekly updates on COVID-19 to address misinformation.



4.5 Coordination

- A Crisis Cabinet Committee on COVID-19, led by Ministry of Health, and Disaster Management Affairs and Public Events, is in place;
- A series of meetings on COVID-19 convened by the high-level Cabinet Committee and the National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee have taken place;
- Humanitarian Country Team, Coordination Cluster, Health Cluster and Donor Health Cluster are regularly meeting to discuss preparedness and monitor the situation.

5. UNITED NATIONS RESPONSE

5.1 Global

- "Spread the Word, Not the Virus" social media campaign launched by UNDP;
- "Pass the message to kick out coronavirus" campaign launched by WHO and FIFA;
- WhatsApp Health Alert to update users and provide health tips on COVID-19 launched by WHO, UNICEF and UNDP;
- WHO has launched the SOLIDARITY trial, to generate robust, high-quality evidence as fast as possible;
- The UN Secretary General has launched a Be Ready campaign tailored around "Be Safe", "Be Informed" and "Be Kind";
- UNICEF recommends open and supportive conversations with children to help them understand, cope and help others;
- WFP is providing support to governments' preparedness and response efforts, including the delivery of life saving equipment and protective medical gear, as well as food for those in isolation and refugees;
- World Bank and International Finance Corporation boards are preparing US\$150 billion over the next 15 months to cover social and impact mitigation. This is in addition to the approved US\$14 billion Fast Track Facility (FTF) to assist countries and companies in dealing with COVID-19;
- OHCHR has provided guidance to ensure that respect for all human rights is at the heart of the COVID-19 response
- On 25 March, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

5.2 Malawi

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Malawi comprises 21 United Nations agencies, fund, and programmes with a presence in the 28 Districts of Malawi. In the initial stages of preparedness and response, WHO and UNICEF have played a central role in the preparation and implementation of the COVID-19 plan in Malawi. Following global guidance, the UNCT is actively contributing to the preparedness and response. WHO is the technical lead, providing guidance and technical support. To ensure coordination and coherence, a COVID-19 coordinator has been identified at the Resident Coordinator's Office to support the UN Task Force referenced below.

5.2.1 Preparedness and Resource Mobilisation (WHO, UNCT)

- The Resident Coordinator activated the Humanitarian Window of the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund (national MPTF), as one mechanism that will support coherent and coordinated resource mobilization efforts;
- The UN is supporting Government through guidance, operational implementation, and resource mobilization through existing coordination structures, which include development partners and NGOs;
 - (i.e. Cabinet Committee, Health and Donor Clusters, Development Partners, Humanitarian Country Team and Technical Working Groups in the areas of health, WASH, education, nutrition, and protection);
- Supporting the recruitment of a Public Health Officer and Health Cluster Coordinator to support the Ministry of Health;
- COVID-19 Contingency Plan developed, and Business Continuity Plan updated.
- UN COVID-19 Task Force established.

5.2.2 Supply Chain and Logistics (WFP)

- To the extent possible and until necessary, in-line with restrictions and current conditions, the UN will endeavor to continue to deliver assistance while minimizing exposures and potential impacts on food insecurity within the country.
- As the co-lead of the Malawi National Logistics Cluster, the UN is also placing great importance in the procurement and prepositioning of COVID-19 supplies and equipment, in support of government and on behalf of the humanitarian community.
- Dedicated and timely COVID-19 logistics coordination/ services, including storage, transportation and engineering, are needed to fill logistics gaps, reduce bottlenecks and lead times, and mitigate foreseen disruptions in the supply chain.
- Critical donor support is urgently required to enable timely procurement and service provision.

5.2.3 Special Groups and Protection Issues (UN Women, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA)

- COVID-19 Task Force for Dzaleka Refugee Camp aimed at strengthening preparedness and response plan was set up by the Ministry of Homeland Security;
- Two 230 square meters Rub Halls were mounted at Dzaleka for contingency;
- In a bid to support government initiatives to streamline processes at border points and ensure access to asylum procedures for asylum seekers, the UN deployed protection capacity to Karonga;
- Through the Ministry of Health and Population, a quarantine site for health screening is under construction for Dzaleka Refugee Camp and its environs. This will serve as a screening point for new arrivals and quarantine for suspected cases;
- Messages on COVID-19 have been disseminated across the refugee camp and surrounding host community with jingles played on the camp's Yetu Community Radio;
- Protection Cluster preparedness and response plan was finalized;
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Taskforce has been set up to support emergency preparedness and response;
- A total of 24 persons (9 females, 15 males) were trained in group interpersonal therapy in the week of 9-14 March;
- Integration of child protection and gender-based violence mitigation and mental health and psychosocial support into C4D messaging and strategies is in progress;
- Health protocols were reviewed to address child protection and minimize unnecessary family separation;
- Advocacy on preventing and addressing the secondary impact of a possible outbreak was undertaken with parliamentarians on 18 March;
- The Spotlight Initiative is re-organizing programming to respond to COVID-19 and address violence against women and girls (UNFPA, UNW, UNDP, UNICEF).

5.2.4 Communications and Communication for Development (UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women)

- Government is being supported in translating COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines for schools into Chichewa (common language).
- Photographs of precautionary measures taken under the Food Security Response Plan (Lean Season Cash Distribution) are [publicly available at this link](#) with captions. Pictures were taken in Nsanje on 24 March 2020;
- Government is being supported to produce and disseminate messages on COVID-19 using different communication channels, including 21 radio stations across Malawi, social media platforms, U-Report and Internet of Good Things;
- Malawian celebrities are being enlisted as part of a media campaign to support the response;
- Government is being supported to ensure enhanced and evidence-based communications and media content on COVID-19, including through the Ministry of Health's weekly press briefings and briefing notes. Recruitment of a COVID-19 Communication Officer to support the response is in process;
- An information bot on COVID-19 was deployed on 13 February, accessible through the U-Report SMS short code 1177;
- A coordination structure on COVID-19 crisis communication has been activated through UN Communications Group;
- The Communication for Development (C4D) group has been set up to harmonize approaches for joint planning and implementation, including the development of a COVID-19 C4D Plan;
- Opinion leaders are being engaged to demystify rumors and misconceptions on COVID-19 through community dialogues and mass communication.

5.2.5 Education (UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, UNESCO)

- The UN is collaborating with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to translate their COVID Prevention Guidelines for schools into Chichewa, and facilitate distribution through printed copies, WhatsApp, social media, radios;
- Radio shows tailored to rural youth are planned;
- Preparedness and response plan for the Education Cluster has been drafted for inclusion in the national response plan;
- The cluster has started mobilising the resources, including re-programming the current projects;
- UN is working with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to boost distance learning options;

- Support towards continued weekly Iron and Folic Acid for adolescents and hygiene promotion in schools after reopening is being considered;
- Immediate needs of required supply items such as sanitation for schools, provision of buckets and soap are being reviewed.

5.2.6 **WASH and Health (WHO, UNICEF)**

- COVID-19 laboratory testing capacity has been put in place;
- WASH cluster response plan was finalized.
- The government is being supported in repairs of WASH infrastructure and procurement of equipment as well as supplies for COVID-19 treatment;
- Supplies, including over 24,000 units of chlorine powder drums, water buckets, water testing kits, laundry soap, hygiene promotion IEC materials, mobile plastic portable toilets and squatting plates have been distributed to four treatment units in Blantyre, Mwanza, Mzuzu, and Mchinji.
- Key messages for Infant and Young Child Feeding in emergencies including maternal and child feeding in the context of COVID-19 are being developed.

5.2.7 **Socio Economic impact and Social Protection (WFP, UNICEF, UNDP)**

- The UN is exploring ways to leverage the Social Cash Transfer Programme as part of Shock Responsive Social Protection, with the intention to reach 606,000 children in households receiving social cash transfer with COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages and a vertical expansion of multipurpose cash top-ups to meet basic needs in all 28 districts of the country.
- Expansion of the Social Cash Transfers Programme to Malawi's four cities is also being explored as COVID-19 is expected to have its worst health and economic effects in urban areas.
- The "COVID-19 Prevention and Response" window has been launched to catalyze private sector action on COVID-19 under the Growth Accelerator programme: <https://forms.gle/JWUYxKGsNXHkmkXY7>;
- The National ID Programme is working on leveraging the national registration and identification process to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

5.2.8 **UN Protocols and Working Arrangements (UNCT)**

- External missions and non-essential travel are discouraged;
- UNCT has conducted a Town Hall for UN staff in Malawi on the COVID-19 situation in the country using a virtual platform;
- The UN continues to adhere to Government instructions on self-quarantine for 14 days after return from foreign missions;
- Virtual meetings, reviewing of programme criticality and teleworking have started on case by case basis.

Additional information and updates

- UN: <https://www.un.org/coronavirus>
- WHO: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- Ministry of Health and Population: <https://www.facebook.com/malawimoh>

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