
**UNHCR REPRESENTATION OFFICE
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
04 September 2020**

Situation Update

- Zambia recorded the first case of COVID-19 on 18 March 2020.
- As of today 04 Sept 2020, the cumulative COVID-19 positive cases is 12,639 including 11,572 (92%) recoveries, 292 deaths and 775 active cases;
- Most of the confirmed cases are concentrated in 3 of the country's 10 provinces (including Lusaka, Copperbelt and Muchinga provinces; 3 other provinces- Central, North-Western and Southern provinces- are beginning to register more and more cases;
- Out of the country's 117 districts 68 districts have confirmed COVID-19 cases including refugee-hosting districts of Kaoma, Kalumbila and Nchelenge.
- Health authorities have indicated that Zambia has not yet attained the peak of the pandemic, which is expected in the next few months.
- There are currently 13 designated laboratories for COVID-19 PCR diagnostics located in five of the country's 10 provinces.
- Following the suspension of sittings due to MPs and staff contracting COVID-19, Parliament has announced that it will resume sessions on 11 September 2020.
- UN agencies supported preparations to strengthen decentralized COVID-19 response. National COVID-19 SOPs and guidelines were finalized and the MOH supported to develop and a dissemination strategy.
- UNHCR Solwezi field office and Kaoma field units have been temporarily closed until further notice to reinforce COVID-mitigation measures. All staff at the field office/unit are teleworking. Lusaka main office also remains closed until further notice.

UNHCR/Partner Response

In these circumstances, UNHCR and partners are adapting our interventions in support of national efforts in the following key areas among others:

- Over 36,000 refugees and host community members have been provided face masks by UNHCR and partners as a risk mitigation measure.
- 10,000 L capacity water tanks have been procured to reinforce availability of potable water supply in 10 health facilities across refugee locations. To foster the safest possible environment for refugees, UNHCR is increasing the number of handwashing stations at collective shelters, reception and transit centers and other gathering points and has improved medical waste management capacity in health-care facilities.
- UNHCR and partners are constructing 3 permanent isolation and quarantine facilities including using refugee housing units, repurposed tents, hospital tents and semi-permanent structures across 3 settlements.
- UNHCR and partners are supporting hygiene-promotion refugee settlements via door-to-door and mass sensitization as well as distribution of hygiene-promotion items including soap to 61,669 refugees and 6,998 host community members in all 3 settlements at double the usual monthly rations as well as provision of 101 buckets and basins for institutional handwashing.
- UNHCR and partners are reinforcing community sensitization/awareness raising activities across the three refugee settlements reaching over 90,000 refugees and host community members (including 45,900 females and 44,100 males of various age-groups

Challenges/ Gaps:

- Response: call center, contact tracers;
- Testing: commodities and reagents
- Human Resources for Health: keeping health care workers healthy and training more
- Drugs: dexamethasone, antibiotics, blood thinners, insulin, BP meds
- Medical supplies: x-ray machines, blood gas analyzer
- Other supplies: linens, cleaning supplies for hospitals, PPEs, etc

Conclusions

- Zambia has widespread COVID-19 cases and deaths; spread can be attributed to certain activities;
- We need to continue emphasizing what each person in Zambia can do to minimize the impact of COVID-19, things like physical distancing, mask wearing, and avoiding “superspreader events”;
- We need to emphasize the importance of protecting people at highest risk of COVID-19 death:
 - Those 60 years and older
 - Those with diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and kidney disease
- We need to continue supporting treatment centers to reduce COVID deaths:
 - Lab reagents
 - Medicines
 - Other supplies
- We need to support strong coordination between different stakeholders and public health officials; to find the safest ways to operate businesses, schools, sports, and places of worship;
- COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future, we need to plan accordingly.

END.

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Lusaka, Zambia*