
**UNHCR REPRESENTATION OFFICE
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
05 October 2020**

UNHCR'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

***AN UPDATE FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES,
GOVERNMENT COUNTERPARTS & UNHCR /PARTNERS
(05 October 2020)***

This update provides information on UNHCR's response to the challenges related to the new coronavirus, COVID-19, the effect the pandemic has or may have on people of concern to UNHCR, and the strategies being pursued in Zambia Operation.

A: Nationally

Epidemiological Situation

- The COVID-19 national recovery rate continues to be around 90 percent and the positivity rate steadily keeps going down;
- As of today, the cumulative COVID-19 cases stands at 15,052, including 14,187 (94%) recovered and 333 (2.2%) deaths;
- Two refugees have so far tested positive to COVID-19 and subsequently recovered since June ending; no new cases have been recorded.

New Developments

- *Inter-agency coordination:* UNHCR participated in the National information management system (IMS) virtual meeting held on 22 Sept 2020 and Intra Action Review conducted from 23-25 Sept 2020.
- *Schools Resumption:* Schools which closed in mid-March 2020 as part of the COVID-19 prevention measures re-opened between 21- 28 September to non-examination classes. UNHCR's strategy is to ensure schools meet the Government established COVID-19 guidelines for re-opening across the three refugee settlements. This means accelerating WASH projects, increasing school supplies such as thermo scanners, hand-washing facilities and masks, as more children return to school. Examination classes went back to classes three months ago.
- *Socio-economic Response:* The Minister of Finance announced Zambia's 2020 Government national budget of K119.6 billion (US\$6B), with increased funding, in nominal terms, to health, to, among other things, combat COVID-19.
- *Back to Office:* HQ has sent out guidelines for Back to work for UN staff. An appeal to all staff is that we should not relax in following the prevention measures at all. Be safe and protect yourselves and your families.

Good Practices/ Innovative Approaches

- All new arrivals are screened for COVID-19, quarantined for at least 14 days and sensitized on the pandemic at the transit centres across all three refugee settlements and Lusaka.
- During the reporting period 104 new arrivals (including 37 in Meheba and 49 in Mayukwayukwa and 18 in Mantapala refugee settlements) were tested for COVID-19. This is a preventive measure adopted by the Government, UNHCR and partners.

B: Updates by Location

Lusaka:

- **Protection**

- In order to supplement efforts of preventing the spread of the COVID -19 in communities, the urban project donated 340 cloth face masks to King Samuel Private School in Kanyama compound. The school was identified by refugee leaders who advised that it also had a good number of refugee children enrolled. The Director of the school thanked UNHCR and the implementing partner Caritas Czech Republic for the wonderful gesture and committed to ensure the masks were distributed to the intended targets who are the pupils.
- Community SGBV/ COVID-19 sensitization exercise was conducted by the women's network from Chipata outreach centre at Malasha Market of Chazanga where 23 (F: 15, M: 8) individuals were reached.
 - CBI:
 - Still in Lusaka, 805 refugees (163 households) in Lusaka were provided with the COVID-19 one-off cash grants of K130 (\$6.5) each. The funds are meant to cushion the vulnerable households with regards to their food needs.
 - 18 vulnerable refugee households received cash grants of K1, 600(\$80) each from UNWFP. The funds are meant to support their basic food needs after being adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Community awareness:
 - Community awareness raising on SGBV referral pathways amid the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted in four outreach centres in Lusaka. Reaching a total of 163 people.

Meheba

- Screening:
 - A total of 37 new arrivals were tested for COVID-19 at the Transit centre. The testing was conducted by the Kalumbila District Health Office on 22 September 2020. The results will be shared during the coming week.
- Schools Resumption/PPE:
 - 5,896 students returned to classrooms in compliance with the COVID-19 prevention guidelines. During the joint UNHCH/District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) monitoring, DEBS distributed 1, 840 masks to children returning to schools.
- Training & Capacity-building:
 - 23 Refugee healthcare workers were trained in COVID-19 preparedness and will be deployed to the COVID isolation and quarantine centres as volunteer workers. The trained refugees were organized by UNHCR in collaboration with the Kalumbila District Health Office. The training attracted health professionals from various backgrounds such as Doctors, Nurses, Public Health, Environmental Health Technologists, Laboratory Technicians and Clinical officers.
 - A total of 80 non-medical Frontline workers were trained while the remaining half will be trained on a later date.
- CBI:
 - Post distribution monitoring (PDM) COVID-19 response targeting 200-250 households was commenced following a run through of the data collection tool for enumerators and staff. The exercise however is running smoothly although it is coupled with many persons not found in homes. Some of them have relocated to other blocks while others have self- settled outside the settlement to engage in income generating activities for improved livelihoods.

- Community empowerment:

Back to School sensitization in Meheba was organized from September 18-21 to ensure that children return to classrooms and parents provide masks for their children, and, additionally it included COVID 19 prevention messaging.

Mantapala

- Screening for those entering the settlement through the barrier gates, and for spontaneous new arrivals using other routes into the settlement, was intensified using thermo-scans, disinfectants and hygiene sensitization. A total of 6670 thermo-scans and 945 vehicle disinfections were made, and 3697 households were sensitized with COVID-19 messages.
- A total of 996 households were inspected by community health volunteers and workers in the use and care of household sanitary facilities as part of promotion of behaviour change.

Mayukwayukwa

- Total of 7,524 individuals (M: 3,343; F: 4,181) were sensitized with COVID-19 prevention messages in MYK settlement.
- On 17 September 2020, 49 New arrivals (M: 23; F: 26) were screened for COVID-19 upon arrival at Transit centre.
- On 15 September 2020, UNHCR participated in the District Epidemic Preparedness and Control Coordination Meeting organized by the DC at Kaoma Nursing & Midwifery School
- Mobile clinic was conducted in collaboration with the Kaoma District Health office from 22-25 September 2020. However, most drugs prescribed could not be accessed

C: Gaps/Challenges

- The major challenge to access health care is *lack of essential medicines* in the health facilities in all the three settlements. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Health, through the District Health office is engaged in mitigating this challenge.
- In *Meheba refugee settlement*, there are *inadequate nutrition support* for malnourished children and Pregnant and Lactating Women, evidenced by increased number of Moderate Malnutrition cases reported from the health facilities.
- *Schools resumption amid COVID-19*
 - Inadequate furniture and classroom space to meet the COVID-19 Social distance guidelines
 - Lack of hand washing facilities, soap and cleaning materials.

END

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