

UNDP Central African Republic

Support to the National Response to Contain the Impact of COVID-19



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

In the Central African Republic (CAR), five COVID-19 cases have been identified with no death reported so far. COVID-19 will place immense strains on fragile African countries, facing a multidimensional crisis with difficult economic and political conditions: insecurity, weak state authority, limited presence and capacity to provide basic public services to population, extreme poverty, and fragility of public health systems, insufficient access to safe water and sanitation, very high levels of unemployment and limited fiscal and policy space.

The pandemic erupts at a sensitive and critical time when the country is preparing the 2020/2022 general and local elections, which will be highly relevant for upholding the peace agreement. UNDP provides essential support through the Elections Assistance Project (PAPEC) as part of which electronic and non-electronic equipment for voters' registration is currently being procured. Voters registration is expected to start early in June.

On the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of CAR (GoC) communicates via the Ministry of Health. The imported cases were communicated to the public on 14 March, 20 and 24 March. This transparency is an element of public trust and confidence in the Government.

However, the initial measures taken (e.g. closing all public & recreational places) are perceived as insufficient by some members of the population. Most people think that the Government should take drastic measures to protect the country from the COVID-19 like in many of their neighboring countries by closing airports, borders, etc. Though people are generally in favor of the restrictive measures taken by the

government, there remains a degree of skepticism as to whether the applicability of these measures in the CAR context where majority of the workforce operates in the informal sector in a sparsely urbanized area and relies on daily subsistence through small commercial market-centered activities. Moreover, the lack of electricity (only 3% in the entire country) and water as well as the lack of decent housing will make further social distancing measures whilst in lock down entirely impossible. The risks are that with more stringent measures, the already fragile social fabric of the country will further break down, leading to riots and/or demonstrations, especially if people are unable to venture out to feed themselves and their families. This break down in social cohesion would provide a breeding ground for armed groups' activities, given that they still control 80% of the territory.

The UNCT, led by the DSRSG/RC/HC is working with Government on a set of further measures to control and prevent a further spread of the epidemic, bearing in mind the above factors. Presidential decrees outlining a new set of measures are thus expected to be issued very soon (this week).

The UNDP office in CAR is actively working with all partners, including the Government, the United Nations country team and MINUSCA to follow the global response effort, focusing on three immediate priorities: (1) supporting the health response including the procurement and supply of essential health products, (2) under WHO's leadership, strengthening crisis management and response; and (3) addressing critical social and economic impact

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Strengthening Health Systems



The capacity of the Minister of Health is enhanced to **coordinate, plan and manage the response and recovery** to COVID-19

Inclusive and Integrated Crisis Management and Multi-Sectoral Response



Protective measures deployed and delivered to ensure continuation of electoral support

Continued support for the **redeployment of local public services**

Support to the implementation of the **Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation** continued (in the event of deviation of Government focus)

Livelihoods improved and local community resilience strengthened, in particular **crisis management capacities and income generating activities**

Socio-Economic Impact and Recovery



Rapid, comprehensive and multi-sectoral assessment of the impact of COVID-19 conducted on public health, essential public services, the local economy and livelihoods. It will assess the consequences of the COVID-19 on the ongoing peace and stabilization process in CAR

Long-term macroeconomic systems analysis conducted to assess progress on SDGs.

Technical and advisory support provided to the Government and a response and recovery plan developed

BUDGET

The country office is operating in a fragile, post-crisis context. It is reprogramming TRAC 1 and 2 resources as well as third party funding, such as Global Fund and others.

OUTPUT	BUDGET	AVAILABLE	GAP
Support to build resilient health systems (including health procurement, training etc.)	\$159,000	\$20,000	\$139,000
Promote inclusive and integrated crisis management and multi-sectoral responses	\$4.59M	\$948k	\$3.64M
Support to address socio-economic impact and recovery	\$330k	\$330k	-
Total	\$5.08M	\$1.29M	\$3.78M