

UNDP COMOROS

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



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

In the context of the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP and its partners support the government of Comoros in the implementation of its plan for preparedness and response. As of March, 30th no cases of COVID-19 have been reported on the three islands (Anjouan, Moheli, Grande-Comore). However, the risk of the introduction and spread of the virus is high due amongst other things to: its presence (63 cases) in Mayotte (70 km distant from Anjouan) as well as the surrounding countries of Madagascar and La Réunion; illicit maritime transportation between Mayotte and the country; a weak surveillance system including at informal/formal entry points; lack of testing capacity; and weak healthcare system.

Highlights:

- H.E. President Azali Assoumani gave a televised address to the population on March 16th and announced the end of public ceremonies such as weddings and commemorations.
- Government of the Comoros created a Permanent Executive Committee on March, 18th for the coordination of the preparedness and response on such topics as logistics, funds raising and management, healthcare, data collection and analysis.
- The Ministry of Education ordered the closing of schools and universities on March, 20th.
- International flights and maritime connections, except for cargo, were officially suspended on March, 23rd but one plane was allowed to land on Tuesday, 24th. Quarantines and isolation sites are being organised in various places of the territory. Approximately 60 people are reported to be in quarantine, and, to date, no case has been confirmed.

- A decree announced by the President on March, 25th suspended mass prayers, including Friday prayers. The UN inter-agency emergency taskforce created in 2017 was reactivated to address the issues of COVID-19 the leadership of WHO.

State of Preparedness:

- To date, as in many countries, the main focus has been on health sector preparedness. Despite this and the efforts of WHO, the sector is woefully underprepared – as yet there is no testing capacity and identified sites for quarantine, isolation and treatment of confirmed cases are not yet fully operational.
- Sectoral preparedness in other key sectors has been slow to get off the ground – but is now underway – UNDP advocacy has played an important role in this.
- Despite the fact that Comoros does not yet have any confirmed cases, the impacts of the global crisis are already beginning to be felt. This is compounded by, amongst others, the fact that the country is heavily reliant on both imports of critical foodstuffs and essential supplies (including soap and hand sanitisers) and also on remittances. NB the vast majority of the Comorian diaspora is resident in France. Therefore, traditional coping capacities are totally undermined.
- A critical challenge in Comoros capacity to respond to a major crisis is also the fact that it has very few international partners resident in country. In addition to the national Red Crescent there are only 3 resident UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF and UNDP). UNFPA and FAO have a field office with small project teams. There are no international humanitarian NGOs.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Strengthening national capacities for preparedness and response

- Integration of non-health sectors into the COVID-19 preparedness and response. Support the Government of Comoros for sectoral coordination on the three islands.
- Integration of other sectors (education, water, hygiene and sanitation, food security, livelihood, health and nutrition) in the Preparedness, Response and in providing support to the Government in the elaboration of a multi-sectoral response plan and a targeted sub-plan for a lock-down scenarios.
- Training of 250 fire-fighters, paramedics from the Directorate General for Civil Protection, volunteers from the Comoros Red Crescent and civil society organization (CSO) on the three islands during the period 17-29 March on good practices and recommendations for coronavirus infection prevention. UNDP provided medical health and personal protective equipment (surgical masks, gloves, thermometer, mucus aspirator, pulse oximeter).
- UNDP as the leader of the UN Operations Management Team (OMT) is responsible for the purchase of PPE and other COVID-19 materials for the UNCT (RCO, UNICEF, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, World Bank, UNFPA and ILO) identified in the One UN Contingency Plan. Focused on support under the programme of Duty of Care and to provide support to essential government workers.

Economic Impact

UNDP is working closely with the Ministries of Finance and Economy to identify critical action areas to help alleviate the economic impacts of the crisis. This includes analytical support to monitor the impact on vulnerable households and communities and the longer-term impact on Comoros's progress towards the SDGs.

Design of UNDP crisis preparedness and response strategy:

Developed a crisis preparedness and response strategy to support the efforts of the Government of Comoros for the implementation of the COVID-19 multisectoral plan. UNDP is working under the guidance of the Regional Office to conduct the criticality analysis and re-programme the available funds and mobilize new fund to support the implementation of the emergency COVID-19 programme in line with our capacities, existing partnerships and the needs of the country.

Communication and outreach

- Active participation UNDP with WHO, UNICEF & UNFPA and support to the National Communication Committee. Preparation and implementation of the Communication Strategy for Covid-19 for the Government. Contribute funds and expertise for the development of targeted media contents about the COVID-19 (print, TV, online on Twitter and Facebook).
- UNDP, in partnership with UNICEF, support the Government in setting-up the toll-free number (#1717). This allows the population to have a direct exchange and all the useful information on the COVID-19. In addition, the toll-free number is a platform that helps creating alerts and connects potential people with COVID-19 symptoms with paramedics and health professionals and intervention teams.
- UNDP in collaboration other UN Agencies supported the Government to establish the outreach and community mobilization programme through the production of communication tools, awareness campaigns on the 3 islands and advocacy with authorities and opinion leaders for the adoption of actions and virus prevention attitudes.
- A media Training on COVID-19 on prevention of misinformation and unfounded rumours on the 3 islands to ensure that the most influential media in the Comoros had sufficient information of the virus to provide accurate coverage and play an active role in the prevention of the spreading of the disease.

BUDGET

Following a programme criticality exercise, UNDP Comoros has re-prioritized and reprogrammed its unspent and uncommitted resources from existing projects by US\$0.567million. UNDP is mobilizing an additional US\$9.43million bringing the total UNDP contribution to the National COVID-19 pandemic to US\$10million. The UNDP COVID-19 programme will be implemented for a duration of 12 to 18 months pending unforeseen evolutions in the pandemic.

Output	Budget	Available*	Gap
Strengthening health systems to respond to COVID-19, including procurement and supply chain management	\$3.0 M	\$0.158M	\$2.84M
Inclusive and multi-sectoral crisis management and response to COVID-19	\$5.0M	\$0.263M	\$4.74M
Socio-economic impact assessment and recovery from COVID-19	\$2.0M	\$0.146M	\$1.85M
Total	\$10million	\$0.567million	\$9.43million

*Resource available from reprogrammed programmes and projects.