

UNDP South Sudan

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



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

South Sudan reported its first confirmed COVID-19 case on April 4th. While the peacekeeping mission (UNMISS) and UN agencies are reducing their footprints in the country, UN operations are continuing with preventive and precautionary measures across the country, in providing protection, humanitarian assistance and supporting peacebuilding and development. As a protection measure, the Government of South Sudan, through a dedicated high-level task force, has restricted all international travels and closed the borders, imposed night curfew and introduced public health measures. The UN in South Sudan is supporting the government's response, for example by strengthening the national healthcare system and sharing information with relevant stakeholders and the general public about COVID-19 prevention.

Currently, access to information and dialogue with the public is challenging. For instance, the country has low telephone and internet access penetration, especially in the rural areas, home to approximately 70 percent of the population. Rumors and disinformation are simultaneously being spread at an unprecedented pace, on social media as well as offline. Timely communication is key to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In addition to

exacerbating the risk to the lives and wellbeing of the people and damaging efforts to slow the spread of the virus, disinformation may instill fear, panic and practices conducive to hostilities, such as hoarding and accusation of infection. This is particularly risky in the context of South Sudan, as the country is fragile and affected by conflict, with weakened or no existing systems to deal with the COVID-19 crisis or its aftermath.

The social and economic impact of the pandemic is already being felt, with businesses of all sizes being affected by supply chain disruptions, shortages and rising market prices for foodstuff and other supplies, and reduced economic activity due to movement restrictions, business closures and curfew. Due to falling global oil prices and the government's response to the pandemic, the remaining quarter of the national budget cycle has required revisions and re-prioritization. This has already affected the state's ability to deliver basic services to the people. The economic impact of the crisis will be long-term and have a spill-over effect on social stability and security.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Health Systems Support



Supporting the Ministry of Health on country level coordination, planning and monitoring, case management, operational support and logistics, and infection prevention through the procurement and transportation of medical supplies, test kits and consumables, and on training of health workers.

Inclusive and Integrated Crisis Management and Response



Setting up and establishing a situation room for coordination of the national response to the crisis, upon request by the Government of South Sudan.

Providing and disseminating reliable COVID-19 related information to the public. By partnering with media, community radios, civil society organizations and the private sector, UNDP is working with communities in local languages to inform, engage, fact-check, and to counter misinformation, hate speech and xenophobia linked to the spread of the virus.

Supporting the national preparedness plan pillar on surveillance, rapid response and case investigation by linking the Health Emergency Operations Center to the Police Emergency Call Centers.

Monitoring human rights and issues of gender equality linked to the crisis.

Supporting the national plan at points of entry by providing communication equipment and motorcycles to strengthen lockdown patrol at border points and for contact tracing.

Social and Economic Impact Needs Assessment and Response



Leading, in collaboration with UNICEF, the UN Country Team's support to the country in recovering from the social and economic impact of the pandemic.

Supporting partners to access reliable data to understand the impact of the pandemic, and find sustainable, resilient and rights-based mitigation measures through a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment and rapid assessment on the impact on gender equality of COVID-19.

Supporting civil society organizations with small grants to produce soap, hand sanitizers and washing kits for distribution and use in far to reach areas, such as markets, cattle camps and public spaces.

Engaging local communities to manufacture face masks for income generating opportunities and distributing them for preventive measures.

BUDGET

OUTPUT	BUDGET	AVAILABLE	GAP
Health Systems Support	\$1.94M	\$800k	\$1.14M
Inclusive and Integrated Crisis Management and Response	\$2.14M	\$96,000	\$2.04M
Social and Economic Impact Needs Assessment and Response	\$356k	\$10,000	\$346k
Total	\$4.43M	\$900k	\$3.53M