

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

The first confirmed COVID-19 case was registered in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on 13 March, 2020. As of 24 August, 6,905 confirmed cases were registered, including 6,232 recoveries and 158 deaths. The lift of the restriction on movement between regions and the curfew, as well as the reopening of the airports for domestic flights approved on 10 July, were interpreted by the population as the end of the pandemic in Mauritania, leading to a lack of respect for barrier measures and a very low level of alerts (-50% of alerts for the call centre). Dedicated efforts have been initiated by the Government and partners with a view to strengthening protection actions, community ICP and RCCE interventions.

The response plan from the Ministry of Health is currently under revision for the adaptation to the new context of the pandemic. The support provided to the Government by the United Nations and the humanitarian and development partners is coordinated through the Incident Command System (ICS). UNICEF ensures the lead of the "Risk communication and community engagement" (RCCE), including community watch, and "Infection Prevention and Control" (IPC) pillars. In accordance with the INFORM COVID-19 Risk Index, Mauritania shows high health and humanitarian impacts risks from COVID-19 that could overwhelm current national response capacity, and therefore lead to a need for additional international assistance.

UNICEF's COVID-19 response

Health

The interventions to improve the conditions of the treatment centre located at the University of Nouakchott are ongoing. They support the continuity of care of asymptomatic COVID-19 patients under quarantine suffering from chronic disease (high blood pressure, diabetes or psychotic disorder), through staff training and medication supply. In addition, UNICEF continues to actively participate in the various technical meetings on COVID-19 management held regularly under the lead of WHO. UNICEF ensured technical support to the Ministry of Youth and Ministry of health through field missions in 12 regions to launch community watch against COVID-19; including training of regional/district supervisors on community awareness; ensuring early alert for any suspect cases and follow-up of confirmed cases and contacts at community level.

WASH and IPC

The IPC pillar continued to support the University of Nouakchott care site. This included 1) training and deployment of hygienist brigades, 2) implementation of the disinfection protocol, 3) delivery of hygiene kits to new residents, 4) setting up of an active listening area for the residents and the organization of adapted daily activities (bicycles for sport, internet, television projection outside in the evening), 5) validation of the disinfection plans. A technical support operation was carried out by the hygiene agents of the Mauritanian Red Crescent (CRM) at this site under the supervision of UNICEF and the DHP (public Hygiene direction). As part of the back-to-school program, UNICEF financed, through the Ministry of education and the Ministry of Hydraulic and sanitation, the provision of 563 hand washing devices with soap and bleach for 205 schools, including 172 in Nouakchott and 33 in the city

of Kiffa (Assaba). The communal disinfection brigades continue their activities in Nouakchott to disinfect public places.

RCCE/C4D

The lift of the restrictions on movement between regions and of the curfew, led to non-compliance with barrier gestures and a very low level of alerts (-50% of alerts for the call centre). A rapid assessment is being carried out to determine the causes of the drop-in alerts. A mini campaign under the theme "responsible deconfinement" was undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The aim of this campaign is to insist on the existence of the disease and the need to protect oneself and others, especially the most fragile (with emphasis on the holiday season). The 1155 toll-free call centre continues to operate. More than 1,339,000 calls have been received by the centre since it opened. Funding has so far been provided by UNICEF. The Minister of Health has requested continued financial support until the end of the year.



The 1155 toll-free call centre

Situation in Numbers



6,905 COVID-19 confirmed cases
158 deaths



867,593 Children affected by COVID-19 school closures



17.5M US\$ required

Already operational in the 3 wilayas of Nouakchott with a mobilization of 1,175 volunteers, the deployment of the community watch/surveillance system in the rest of the country is ongoing. The community monitoring system is already set up in the wilayas of Dakhlet Nouadhibou and Inchiri, where regional coordinators, focal points, supervisors and volunteers have been identified (450 for Dakhlet Nouadhibou and 60 for Inchiri). A refresher training course for the teams in Nouakchott has been held for the benefit of the 47 supervisors. The objective is to strengthen the capacities of young volunteers, to renew awareness messages, especially after the deconfinement, and to train them in the use of the "Covidalert" reporting application.

A 3-day training course for 60 multi-channel journalists was conducted in collaboration with the Mauritanian Information Agency (AMI) and will equip them in terms of RCCE and fight against misinformation.

UNICEF ensures the lead of the "Risk communication and community engagement" (RCCE) response pillar and is supporting the COVID-19 helpline. More than 1 million 250 thousand calls have been handled by the call centre since its opening. On social medias, the publications reached 542,400 people from 5 to 19 August, 2020.

Education

The reopening of schools is planned from 1 September to 30 October 2020 for allowing children to sit final exams and to organize remedial courses.

UNICEF and its partners continue to support jointly with the Local Education Group the MoE COVID-19 education response plan including all measures for a safe start of the new school year. UNICEF also supports the preparation of a study carried out by the National Office for Statistics to understand the access to the distance education programs implemented by the MoE. Concerning the refugee camp of M'Berra and the host community of Bassiknou, education radio programs are

now on hold as teachers are on holiday. Parental education programs and follow-up (for homework) are still implemented through WhatsApp groups.

Child Protection

Child Protection actors carry on the sensibilization of population and children on preventive measures in targeted regions, with 18,546 (7,445 for the reporting period) persons including 9,970 children (5,118 for the reporting period) reached nationwide. UNICEF supported Child Helpline registered 445 calls (222 for the reporting period) with rape cases, domestic violence and harassment dealt with by operators. Specific messages on WhatsApp groups were shared to widen the use of this resource allowing access to information and referral to services. Despite restricted access to the families and with the involvement of child protection actors, individual assistance to vulnerable children was sustained, with 28 (19 for the reporting period) victims of sexual violence supported. The on-going partnership with Mauritanian psychologists and psychiatrists provides skills enhancement and psychosocial support to operators working for the COVID-19 helpline established by the Ministry of Health (74) and to the Child Helpline (12) run by UNICEF NGO partner AMSME.

Supply

The supply plan for COVID-19 focuses on securing PPEs, RUTF and other lifesaving items. The orders for COVID-19 supplies placed is \$332,565. Supplies worth \$121,502 were received and donated to the Government. As of 22 July, the current order is still expected to be delivered since the latest reporting period. Movement of humanitarian goods into the country has not been affected despite restriction and border closure. However, these restrictions at global level have an impact on international supply chain and the delivery of programme supplies.

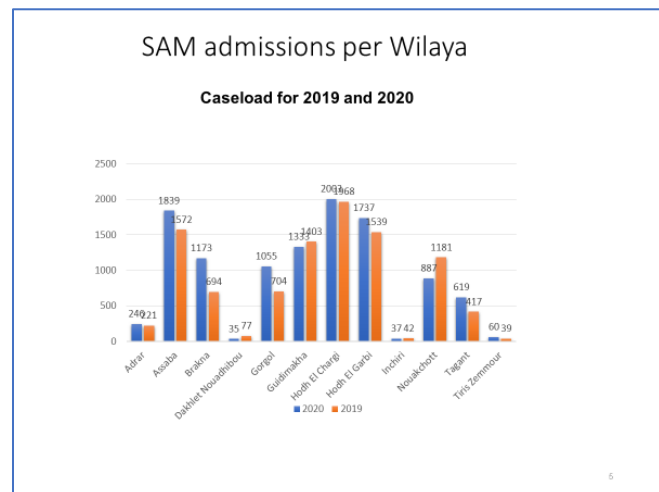
Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

Nutrition:

UNICEF, in close collaboration with the MoH and partners, supported the treatment of SAM children, with a focus on the districts affected by nutrition emergency (GAM > 15 per cent and / or SAM > 2 per cent). A total of 13,308 SAM cases were admitted for treatment throughout the country since January, including 9,749 cases in 21 emergency districts. Mobile strategy and involvement of community health workers in the OPT programme are being scaled up throughout the country as part of the roadmap for introducing the simplified approach. Regarding prevention of wasting, 49,575 primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms. In addition, 21,816 children 6-23 months were reached micronutrients powder distribution to ensure their home food fortification in eight emergency districts (Aioun, Bababe, Bogue, Ghabou, Kaedi, Kankossa, Ould Yenge, Selibaby). To date, 98,548 children were systematically screened in the health care facilities, resulting in the detection of 7,271 SAM children and 15,225 MAM children.

Screening mass campaigns were organized in 13 districts covering 93% (158,001/169,580) of children under five years and allowing to detect and refer for treatment 905 SAM and 4,289 MAM cases. 13,308 cases of SAM were admitted for treatment, i.e. 59.2% of the annual target (22,470) and 50% of the burden (26,435). SAM admissions are up 8% from last year (13,308 versus 12,325) but due to the low proportion (68%) of reports completed in May, this proportion of SAM cases admitted could be higher. 4 regions of the country recorded more than 15% increase in SAM compared to 2019 (Assaba (17%); Tagant (48%); Gorgol (50%); Brakna (69%)). This increase in the number of cases reinforces the dynamics of the upward review of the country's need for nutritional inputs. The nutrition technical group has estimated an increase about 80% of current acute malnutrition burden which implies additional supplies needs ensuring quality treatment SAM cases (30,000 cartons of RUTF; 218 cartons of therapeutic milk F75; 136 cartons of therapeutic milk F100 and 27,300 bottles of amoxicillin

125 mg/5ml). At national level, the integrated Management of acute malnutrition performance indicators met the SPHERE standard norms with 90% of recovery rate; 0.3% of death rate and 9.1% of defaulter rate. A total of 3,900 cartons of RUTF distributed in 5 emergency regions (Assaba, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Hodh Chargui) by the July and beginning August 2020. To date, it remains 8,700 cartons of RUTF (from CERF funding) in UNICEF warehouse.



Health:

In the three regions supported by UNICEF, 19,784 children aged 0-11 months received their third dose of pentavalent vaccine, 19,856 PCV13 and 19,601 their measles-rubella dose. UNICEF supported the Ministry of health: (i) to install 265 out of 404 cold chain; (ii) to conduct supportive supervision on vaccines stock management and timely reporting. Health care providers, including immunization providers, continue to provide the necessary services for detection, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases, including for children, pregnant and lactating women in health and community facilities. Data of children treated for diseases are not yet available due to the daily burden associated to the management of COVID-19.



A mother is carrying her baby at the entry of the Nouakchott's health center

WASH:

The completion level of drinking water supply and solar water points has reached more than 80% in the Hodh El Chargui region and more than 50% in the Guidimakha and Assaba regions. These water points should cover an estimated population of 24,000 people. All the boreholes have been drilled and are positive, making it possible to already provide water to the populations in this period of heat wave.

The promotion of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) activities continue in all the target regions, under the supervision of the DRHAs. The strategy of certification and celebration of ODF localities has been adapted to the situation.

New partnerships are being finalized with NGOs in the areas of intervention (Nouakchott, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh El Chargui, etc.). These PCA cover Wash in School, Wash in Health centres facilities and CLTS.

Education:

The students are practically on holiday, waiting for classes to reopen in September. Distance learning activities through printed learning content and WhatsApp groups continue for BAC and DEF candidates. In this regard, 138 (55 girls; 83 boys) DEF children and 176 (53 girls; 123 boys) BAC children continue to benefit from UNICEF-supported distance learning courses. With regard to printed learning content, 1239 copies were offered to students (648 DEF; 591 BAC), including 743 courses and 496 exercises.

Concerning the strengthening of school infrastructure in the M'Berra camp, the construction work on the administrative block at the middle and high schools has been completed and construction of the extension to School 6 has since begun.

As part of capacity-building for teaching staff, UNICEF has supported teacher training activities organized by the NGO RET for 84 teachers.

Child Protection:

Implementation of child protection activities continues in the 9 targeted regions. A close follow-up is ensured for the 71 children deprived of liberty, and the follow-up ongoing of the 48 children released since the beginning of the pandemic.

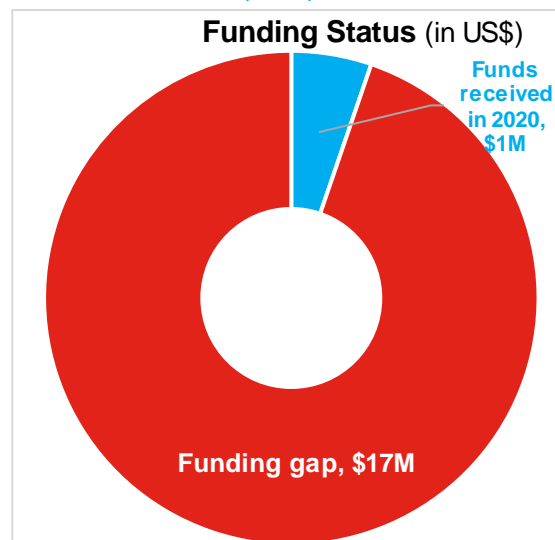
Supply and Logistics:

As part of the emergency response, US\$ 1,128,172.03 worth of supplies were distributed across the country from January to 22 July 2020, including RUTF and anthropometric items targeting 22,470 children (US\$ 1,063,181.95), along with educational items (US\$ 64,990.08).

Funding Overview and Partnerships

US\$ 18,800,000 is estimated to be needed for responding to the COVID-19 epidemic in Mauritania in addition to the chronic humanitarian situation. UNICEF Mauritania has mobilized only 7 per cent of funding out of a total of US\$ 18.8 million funding requirements. The call centre is currently facing a critical financial shortfall (estimated at US\$1,800,000 for one year). Indeed, this system absorbs a very large part of the funds of the RCCE pillar: every month, approximately US\$ 150,000 are needed for its operation. In addition, the Community monitoring and surveillance system currently being set up throughout the country is also encountering financing difficulties which are slowing down its deployment. UNICEF Mauritania wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude to all public and private sector donors (particularly BMZ, Denmark, GPE, Sida, USAID, The UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund- UN COVID-19 MPTF). The ability of the office for achieving many of the results presented in the summary table of program results is largely due to the flexibility of some donors to use non-humanitarian sources of funds to carry out actions to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

USD 18,800,000



External Media:

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritanie/videos/2566567143559534/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritanie/videos/2908160285900623/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritanie/videos/540272266645699/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritanie/videos/1478504702311215/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritanie/videos/1153429648326740/>

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Annex A

Summary of Programme Results

	UNICEF and IPs Response	
Sector	2020 target	Total results*
Risk Communication and Community Engagement		
Number of people reached by COVID-19 prevention messages	1,677,243	1,677,243
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	168,900	143,295
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	1,200,000	1,339,000
WASH and IPC		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	50,000	10,000
Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	5,000	6,048
Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	2,000	282
Health		
Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases including among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women	300	168
Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care, HIV care and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) response care in UNICEF supported facilities ¹	8,200 children 3,280 women	63,211 children 3,970 (2025 G;1945 B) treated for childhood disease 19,784 children aged 0-11 months - third dose of pentavalent vaccine 19,856 PCV13 19,601 measles and rubella vaccine 962 women
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms	29,220	49,575
Nutrition		
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	22,470	13,308 (6,856 girls, 6,452 boys)
Education		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	150,000	18,353 children (7,774 girls, 10,579 boys) Pre-school: 524 girls, 476 boys Primary: 7124 girls, 9819 boys Secondary: 126 girls, 284 boys
Child Protection and GBV		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	200	48
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support	10,000	131
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	900	248

¹ "This indicator monitors the number of consultations and services provided to children and women; hence there may be significant double counting".

Annex B

Funding Status

Sector	Funding requirements	Funds available	Funding gap \$	Gap %
C4D/ RCCE	2,300,000	387,969	1,912,031	83%
WASH & IPC	6,500,000	450,985	6,049,015	93%
Nutrition	3,000,000	80,000	2,920,000	97%
Health	4,000,000	220,000	3,780,000	95%
Child Protection	1,000,000	15,000	985,000	99%
Education	1,000,000	110,000	890,000	89%
Data collection, coordination, technical support and operational costs	1,000,000	35,000	965,000	97%
Total	18,800,000	1,298,954	17,501,046	93%