



COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE

This update is produced by the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Lesotho



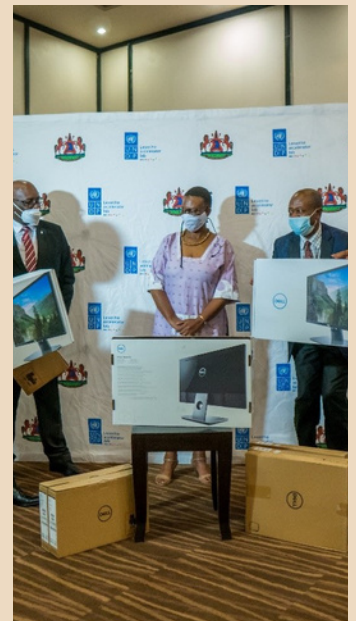
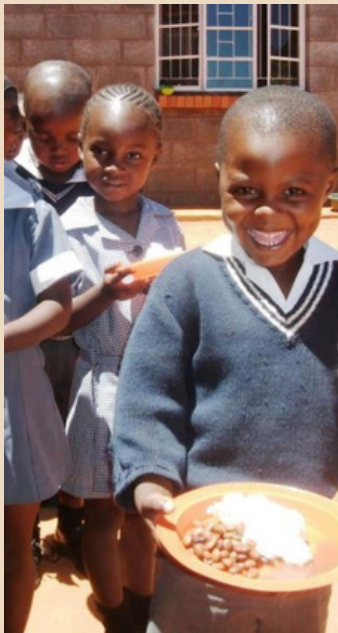
Key Figures as at 16 May 2021

LESOTHO

87 981 tests conducted
10 790 confirmed cases
6 427 recoveries
320 deaths
20 267 vaccine doses administered

AFRICA

3 999 382 confirmed cases
84 844 deaths



OVERVIEW:

Regional Situation

- Globally, there have been 162 177 376 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 3 364 178 deaths, reported to WHO. Further, a total of 1 264 164 553 vaccine doses have been administered globally.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, there have been 3260,650 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 82,246 deaths, reported to WHO. The case fatality rate in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 2.5%.
- In South Africa, there have been 1 611 143 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 55 183 deaths, reported to WHO. Further, a total of 182,983 vaccine doses have been administered in South Africa.
- In Lesotho, there have been 10,790 confirmed cases of COVID-19, against 87 981 tests conducted, and 320 deaths reported to WHO. The case fatality rate currently stands at 2.9%.



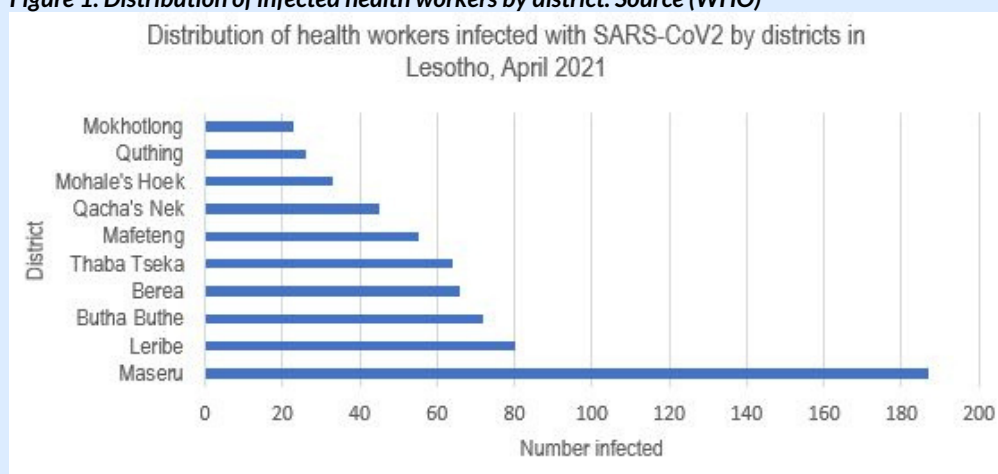
Situation in Lesotho

- By the end of April 2021, Lesotho had recorded cumulative laboratory-confirmed cases of 10,773 of COVID-19. The top five districts with the highest caseload are Maseru, Leribe, Butha Buthe, Qacha's Nek, and Berea. *Table 1* provides the number of new cases by district from epi-week 3 to 17. Since the last update, there are 53 new cases recorded in ten districts with Maseru, Mafeteng and Butha Buthe reporting the highest number of cases at 13, 6 and 4 respectively.
- Qacha's Nek and Quthing did not report any case during the month. There is a significant proportion of the reported cases (35.8%) that has not been allocated to any of the districts due to poor documentation during sample collection.
- A total of 651 health workers of different disciplines had been infected with SARS-CoV2 with Maseru having the highest number at 187 followed by Leribe (80), Butha Buthe (72) and Berea and Thaba Tseka with 66 and 64 respectively. The other districts share the remaining 171 cases. *Figure 1* provides the distribution of infected health workers by district.

Table 1: weekly new cases by district. Epi week 3 to 17 of 2021 . Source (WHO)

| DISTRICT | EPIDEMIOLOGICAL WEEK | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Berea | 91 | 92 | 130 | 48 | 14 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Butha Buthe | 74 | 126 | 54 | 59 | 43 | 11 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Leribe | 219 | 131 | 104 | 96 | 61 | 22 | 15 | 20 | 99 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Mafeteng | 70 | 47 | 40 | 31 | 13 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Maseru | 178 | 272 | 221 | 93 | 139 | 22 | 19 | 2 | 4 | 24 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Mohale's Hoek | 5 | 48 | 29 | 18 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mokhotlong | 41 | 14 | 29 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Qacha's Nek | 61 | 20 | 58 | 27 | 38 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Quthing | 27 | 31 | 36 | ND | ND | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thaba Tseka | 116 | 34 | 72 | 68 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Unknown | 1 | 22 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 8 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 883 | 837 | 776 | 448 | 359 | 67 | 62 | 32 | 111 | 30 | 13 | 6 | 16 | 14 | 17 |

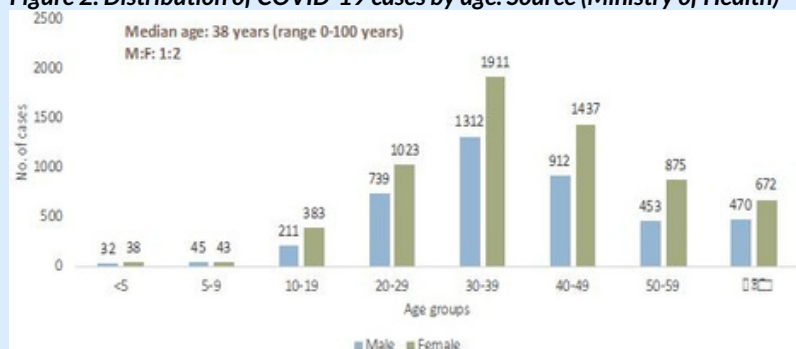
Figure 1: Distribution of infected health workers by district. Source (WHO)



Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by age

- The distribution of cases by age groups shows that the most affected age group was those between 30-39 years, followed by those between 40 -49 years of age. Those least affected was the age group below 5 years. In all age categories, females were more affected than males as shown in *figure 2* below.

Figure 2: Distribution of COVID-19 cases by age. Source (Ministry of Health)



A QUICK REVIEW OF 2021 Q1 NUMBERS IN FIGURES

As Lesotho enters its second year under the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to minimise the disruption caused by the pandemic. From the onset of the pandemic, the UN has supported the Government and people of Lesotho to ensure the continuity of health services, to protect people and ensure that nobody is left behind and to support the economy to Build Back Better.

Below presents a quick snapshot of the UN's work in the first quarter of 2021.



206

Total number of health facilities supported to provide essential health services

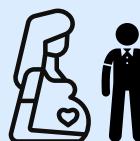
13

Additional health facilities supported to provide routine immunizations



15 409

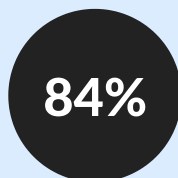
Number of children receiving immunizations over the quarter



75 859

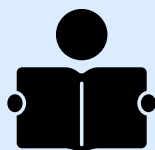
Women received maternal health services

98 698 Women and **56 303** men received a multi-month dispensation of ARTs



84%

of people living with HIV now receive a multiple month dispensation of ARTs to protect them during the pandemic.



59 928

learners were provided access to group handwashing stations



115

of these washing stations were installed in schools

Construction of a shelter for victims of violence, was completed in Q1 and handed to the Ministry of Home Affairs. To further prevent gender-based violence, 41 Community Based Protection Committees were trained on how to protect themselves and others from violence and to use referral mechanisms.



6 273 women and **4 679** men benefitted from cash transfers worth

M831 per month.



26 607 farming households benefitted from food and nutrition schemes



5 000 households in the mountain districts were provided with maize seeds

19 207 households were provided with bean seeds and **400** households in Maseru and Mafeteng that were provided with potato seeds.



VACCINATION OF HEALTH WORKERS CONTINUES

Vaccination of health care workers and other priority groups continued in all the ten districts. Between the launch of the vaccination roll out on the 10th March 2021 and the 10th May 2021, 20,267 people have been vaccinated. The Government has achieved 95% of its target to vaccinate 21,246 people over the first two months of its vaccination plan. There were 29 mild adverse events following the COVID-19 vaccination (AEFIs), all of which were resolved.

ICT EQUIPMENT PROCURED TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS CONTINITY

As part of the ongoing support to the Government of Lesotho's response to COVID-19, UNDP Lesotho procured ICT equipment to support Government Ministries' business continuity during the pandemic. The official handover of ICT equipment to respective Ministries was held on the 14th April 2021. The ICT equipment comprised of 42 laptops with docking stations, 2 smart TVs, 2 audio distributors for recording of live sessions in parliament, 2 room cameras, speakers, desk microphones and 1 online streaming encoder. The ICT equipment was procured in response to Ministries' needs to ensure continuity of work and efficiency in delivery.

During the collection and signing ceremony of the ICT equipment, officiated by the UNDP Resident Representative and UN RC a.i Ms. Betty Wabunoha, The Ministry of Development Planning received 25 laptops and docking stations, and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Relations received 10 laptops and docking stations. The Ministry of Small Business Development received 10 laptops and docking stations to support the development of the Micro Business Registry and to assist the identification and targeting of MSMEs that require support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation received 4 laptops and docking stations for the continuity of the Enhancing Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development Project (EYES). The Lesotho National Assembly's Lower House was installed with state-of-the-art ICT tools in February 2021, to help facilitate social distancing in meeting rooms and to ensure business continuity of the House in the current COVID -19 environment.



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FIELD MISSION TO ASSESS PROGRESS OF COVID-19 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

FAO, with support from The Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the World Bank, is implementing a project to mitigate and limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods and wellbeing of the vulnerable people in the country.

Targeted households were assisted with agricultural inputs, including bean, maize, and potato seeds, as many households did not have sufficient income to procure seeds for the main summer crop due to the impact of COVID-19. The agricultural inputs are meant to ensure protection and restoration of livelihoods throughout the 2020/2021 agricultural season.

On the 19th April 2021, officials from the World Bank, SADP, and FAO conducted a field mission visiting two project site districts to assess the progress of the project. Beneficiary fields were inspected and interviews conducted in Moriija and Semonkong, and in Qacha's Nek and Maseru. The officials reported that beneficiary farmers are expected to produce high yields. The beans are almost at harvesting stage; some farmers had begun harvesting and others are planning to do so within a week. The maize was also approaching maturity and would be ready for harvesting within a few weeks.



FAO and World bank officials in Qacha's Nek.



Beneficiary fields which were inspected.

LESOTHO VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT, IMPACT OF COVID ON LOCAL LIVES

The Annual Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment were presented by the Disaster Management Authority in April 2021. The Assessment revealed that 663,000 people are food insecure in Lesotho. 553,000 people in rural areas are food insecure, while 108,000 people in urban areas are food insecure. 1,783 households, 1,180 from rural areas and 603 from urban areas were contacted.

The assessment revealed that COVID-19 has exacerbated the existing high unemployment in the country. Since March 2020, many migrants returned home from South Africa, especially during lockdowns and the associated unemployment from lockdowns. Many businesses have not been fully operational since the start of the pandemic, causing workers to lose jobs or hours, and thus resulting in lower incomes. For some Basotho, their livelihoods improved with the lifting of lockdown restrictions. However, it will take years for everyone's livelihood to recover from the impact of COVID-19. About 87% of households indicated that their food stocks were less than 10kg, equivalent to less than one months' food supply. Food stocks declined due to rising food prices, reduced capacity to procure agricultural inputs for farming households and increased difficulty in accessing markets...

Further findings from the report indicate that:

- Staple food prices remained high and are expected to continue to remain high in the coming months
- Maize meal prices increased by approximately 20% annually.
- Wheat flour prices increased by approximately 30% annually.
- Fuel prices are also increasing.
- Food inflation increased from 5.5% in February 2020 to 13.5% in February 2021.



LESOTHO IN FINAL STAGE OF THE INTRA-ACTION REVIEW

The Government of Lesotho, with technical and financial support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other development partners, is currently undertaking its first Intra-Action Review (IAR).

The IAR is a country-led process conducted in all ten districts of Lesotho. The IAR documents experiences of COVID-19 responders and collectively analyzes the on-going in-country response to COVID-19 through identifying achievements, challenges, best practices, and opportunities over the year. Lesotho is in its final stage of the compilation and consolidation of the report.

The final report will be used as a tool to improve the current response by sustaining best practices that have demonstrated success and by preventing recurrent mistakes. The report will also use lessons learned from the response efforts to strengthen the health system, with a focus on enhanced resilience, responsiveness, people-centeredness.



WHO and government officials at one of the IAR consultations.

LESOTHO CONTINUES IN BLUE STAGE



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