

COVID-19 Regional Update

Date: 4 – 8 May 2020

Somali Region

Fourteen individuals tested positive for COVID-19 so far in the Somali Region. All have travel history from Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia, and are currently under quarantine in Moyale and Jigjiga respectively. It has been reported that one person escaped the Moyale quarantine center but was later caught in Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region and returned to the quarantine center, including 16 other individuals he had been in contact with. A total of 1,576 persons, all with travel history, are currently under quarantine in the region.

Key activities undertaken this week are:

- House-to-house awareness raising campaigns are ongoing in Jigjiga, Degahbur, Wajale Towns.
- With the start of Ramadan, public transport has been banned in towns from 8:30pm onwards to avoid evening gatherings.
- Karamara Hospital has been identified as the main COVID-19 treatment center, while other health services have been moved to Ayar Dega and Jigjiga Health Centers.
- Fifteen quarantine centers with a carrying capacity of 500 – 1,000 persons have been established so far and are ready for operation.
- 400 beds were purchased for the quarantine and treatment centers. Furthermore, 10 mechanical ventilators are in the process of being purchased, which will increase the number of ventilators to sixteen in the region.
- Jigjiga University and the regional government with the support of the federal government are planning to open three additional laboratories for testing.
- The federal government handed over 4,000 viral transport media to the regional government to facilitate further sample collection from eleven zones and the transportation of the samples to the Jigjiga laboratory.
- So far, 43 million Ethiopian birr have been raised to support COVID-19 prevention and control.
- UNICEF, WHO, IOM, Save the children and ACF are the main partners supporting COVID-19 prevention in the region.

Some of the challenges Somali Region is facing in COVID-19 preparedness and prevention are:

- Despite the awareness creation campaigns, behavioral change in the communities is slow.
- The vegetable markets in Jigjiga Town are the main areas where prevention measures are undermined.
- While Jigjiga University serves as a quarantine center, it also functions as an isolation center, which poses a higher risk for internal virus transmission.
- The gap in COVID-19 prevention support remains significant, limiting the preparedness of the region for managing the spread of the virus.
- Next to the threat of COVID-19, the eastern part of the region also suffers from severe floods, which add to the pressure put on the lives and livelihoods of the local communities.

Harar and surrounding areas

Key activities undertaken in Harar and surrounding areas this week are:

- Awareness creation campaigns are ongoing.
- Haromaya University and Hiwot Fana Hospital mobilized 40 general and specialized doctors for a mass community screening in Aweday Town.
- The Private Health Centers Association of Harar donated 80 cylinders with a carrying capacity of 42 liters and a cash amount of 159,500 Ethiopian birr for COVID-19 prevention and control.
- TURE donated facial masks and thermometers to the regional government.

Some of the challenges Harar and surrounding areas are facing in COVID-19 preparedness and prevention are:

- Despite the awareness creation campaigns, behavioral change in the communities is slow.

Dire Dawa

Some of the challenges Dire Dawa is facing in COVID-19 preparedness and prevention are:

- Despite increasing numbers of returnees arriving from Djibouti, the city is taking limited COVID-19 prevention measures.

Oromia Region

One individual tested positive for COVID-19 this week in Borana Zone. The individual has travel history from Kenya, and is currently under treatment in Moyale Hospital. A total of 105 persons are currently under quarantine in Borana Zone.

Key activities undertaken in Borana Zone this week are:

- The preparation of a COVID-19 laboratory center at the Yabello Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Yabello Town is in progress.
- Awareness creation campaigns and social mobilization are ongoing in the zone.
- VSF-Suisse collaborated with the Yabello Health Office on door-to-door awareness creation and counseling in Dikale, Utallo, Hara-Hawaxxu and Haraweyu Kebeles.
- VSF-Suisse supported a local volunteer on hand-washing demonstrations and social distancing promotion in Dillo and Dire Districts.

Some of the challenges Borana Zone is facing in COVID-19 preparedness and prevention are:

- Despite the awareness creation campaigns, behavioral change in the communities is slow, in particular in market places.