The Protection Reference Group (PRG), jointly led by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and Protection Cluster has launched a monitoring tool of protection concerns in light of COVID-19. The tool is aimed to support the PRG in analyzing the protection concerns linked to COVID-19 restrictive and protective measures, and in promoting informed advocacy with the relevant forums. The reporting will also allow for better programming and strengthen the protection component in COVID-19 preparedness and response. The tool is accompanied with a note to non-protection partners on principles to follow for reporting of protection concerns and the referral pathways for individual protection cases.

A new revised HNO-HRP process and templates has been introduced for 2020 HPC which calls for a greater depth and breadth of identification of needs and analysis, done jointly with partners at sectoral and intersectoral level. Focusing on strengthening the multi-sectoral nature of needs and response, identifying priority groups and geographic areas directly based on the needs, establishing a monitoring system to allow for analysis of changes situations and needs and ensuring inclusivity through disaggregation by gender, race, disability and other diversity characteristics. Due to the current pandemic, guidance is being revised and likely simplified by global leads to support the different countries in the process. The new guidance will ensure centrality of protection throughout the process and that Protection Clusters lead the identification of priority geographic area.
Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster

National coordination meeting - The GBV SC held 2 sessions of its bi-weekly GBV SC virtual coordination meeting with the participation of 36 and 54 partners in session one and two respectively. The major topics discussed during the meetings included: the provision of justice and legal aid during COVID-19; GBV SC Floods Preparedness and Response plan and the AoR; Pibor inter communal violence highlights; Dignity Kit programming in the context of COVID-19; UNFPA and Assessment findings in Lukurnyang IDP site in Pibor.

State Level - The Sub Cluster held 2 consultative meetings with the GBV SC State Coordinators to discuss on modalities the National GBV SC can continue to work and support the GBV State Coordinators amidst COVID-19 pandemic, i.e. on trainings, state coordination meetings and other related coordination work at state level as well as provision of technical support. The GBV SC facilitated a virtual training on Safe and Ethical reporting for GBV cases for the Bentiu Sub-National team. 17 service providers from different Organizations in Bentiu participated.

Child Protection Sub-Cluster

CP HRP Progress Update - In July, the CP AOR and its members ensured that 42,962 children and their caregivers (53% females) accessed essential CP services including provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and life skills to 4,483 children (2,335 girls and 2,148 boys) to build their resilience, self-esteem and regain their sense of normalcy. One hundred and thirty-five children (68 girls and 67 boys) received specialised child protection services including 41 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) provided with FTR services /placed in a safe protective family or community-based environment (alternative care). A total of 74 Child Protection actors (34 females and 40 males) were trained in CPIE including on Case Management and Psychosocial Support (PSS).

National coordination meeting - The CP SC coordination meeting centered around COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan and flood preparedness and response. Mid-year progress against the 2020 HRP targets has been presented with a 67% achievement (333,779 People reached (214,000 children; 1411 UASC documented and 86 reunified). However, overall funding for CP Interventions is limited, with a potential to negatively impact on the specialized CP service delivery. It’s worth noting that a significant number were reached with messaging on prevention the child protection risks and COVID-19 related CP risks as the CP AOR partners scaled up interventions around CP messaging.

Flood Preparedness and Response Update - A draft Flood Preparedness and Response Plan has been designed on CP response, focusing on two key areas - Promotion of Safety and Wellbeing, which include Child Protection Assessment, PSS, Awareness raising, Capacity Building and disaster risk reduction, as well as Provision of life saving Child Protection services, Provision of Case Management including FTR, CP referrals and community Based Child Protection Mechanisms. The Plan to be shared with the CP AOR members and SAG for their review and inputs.

Unaccompanied and Separated children in Boma - The CP SC in collaboration with the technical working group for unaccompanied and separated children facilitated a 2-days rapid training of 15 field-based staff for VSF Suisse on Family Tracing and Reunification/Child Protection Information Management system. The workshop was devoted to document the 162 Unaccompanied and Separated children identified in Boma county, Jonglei State due to inter communal violence. The training which was facilitated by Save the Children and aimed to equip VSF Suisse staff with basic knowledge and skill to identify, document and refer the UASC for further support.

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Nutrition and GBV workshop – The Nutrition Cluster in collaboration with the GBV SC, UNICEF and WFP GBV team convened a two-day virtual workshop on Nutrition and GBV for more than 50 participants. Target audience for the workshop was selected based on Nutrition Cluster partners implementing the safety audit tool, GBV SC state level representatives and representatives from other clusters. The objectives of the workshop included review the GBV safety audit tools, finalization of key recommendations from the safety audits in the nutrition sites, facilitate sharing of lessons learnt, sharing a mapping of GBV SC technical support in the states to support nutrition cluster partners.

GBV Capacity Building Trainings - A survey to conduct GBV Capacity Building Training Needs Assessment has been sent out to all GBV SC partners to identify the priority needs from the GBV field coordinators, co-leads, and GBV focal points involved on GBV coordination country-wide. The survey will inform GBV capacity building activities in the current funding.

Housing, Land and Property Technical Working Group (HLP TWG)

Revision of the 2020 Workplan – The HLP TWG has revised the Workplan for 2020 considering the change on context of operation. The revision includes the addition of COVID-19 considerations, re-planning of assessments to be conducted and the emerging topics for advocacy. The TWG identified several activities that have already been accomplished during the first semester of the year, highlighting the progress made by the group in advancing HLP issues in the country.

HLP assessments - members of the HLP TWG have conducted assessments in different areas of the country to identify HLP issues. Areas assessed include Bor, Duk and Kajo Keji. Several HLP projects are also being implemented, including on legal assistance and counselling and promoting women HLP rights in Unity, Upper Nile, Eastern Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

Mine Action Sub-Cluster

Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) -Related Accidents - No accidents were recorded for the month of July.

MAG Resumes Clearance Operations - After a pause due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) resumed clearance of explosive ordnance in July, following a period of refresher training. MAG has taken a number of measures to ensure training was conducted safely, including the use of face masks and maintaining physical distancing between staff.

Although mine action clearance activities have been limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic until recently, mine action partners across the country have still been able to mitigate risks of accidents through explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), which reached a total of 863 women, 754 men, 626 girls and 615 boys in July 2020.

The MAG team conducting training in line with COVID-19 safety measures. Photo: MAG Explosive Ordnance Risk Education.
The deployed team is working where the roads connecting Nimule, Juba, and Magwi towns meet, clearing an area that is important for transit, but further away from population centres to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus.

During July, the operational teams cleared 22,852 square meters of land, destroying 17 sub-munitions from cluster bombs that had been dropped throughout Central and Eastern Equatoria during the Second Sudanese Civil War.

Many of these "bomblets" did not explode when the cluster bomb was dropped decades ago, but they still pose a risk, especially to farmer (who might detonate them while preparing the ground for planting or harvesting), people who go into the bush to burn charcoal, scrap metal collectors, and children who may be curious about the item.

To report a suspicious object, please contact UNMAS at its 24-hour hotline (remains open during the COVID-19 crisis): 092 000 1055 or via email at report@unmas.org