State: Republic of Rwanda

Committee: Junior UNICEF

Agenda: Impact of Covid-19 on Children

As you all may know, Covid-19 is an infectious disease that started as a respiratory illness and caused the death of 6.3 million people around the world. In Rwanda, the first case was detected on March 14, 2020 and schools were closed on March 16 2020. Following that the first curfew was declared on March 22, 2020. As of now, the total number of cases in Rwanda is approximately 130 thousand and the number of deaths is 1459.

Many of us are aware of the devastating consequences of Covid-19 in education, economic, and public health around the world. Rwanda was in the middle of an economic boom when the covid-19 epidemic started in March 2020. Then, because of covid-19 Rwanda experienced various economic problems such as loss of jobs, closure of some business, shops, and restaurants, etc. But, what about the effects on children? Covid-19 outbreak has forced millions of students to online education and isolation at home. According to Education Task, the majority of university students still prefer to study at home because they don’t have to leave their homes. Doesn’t it sound more comfortable than face-to-face education? However, the reality is very difficult and challenging to many students, parents and teachers especially in developing countries (like Rwanda) where the accessibility and use of technology in education are not common. When parents went work, children stayed at home alone for a very long time and that caused lack of childcare, mental issues such as a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern, anxiety and depression. Moreover, domestic violence cases increased in some families during the closure period. This is just a few of the events that have a negative impact on children's psychology.

For this purpose, we, as the government of Rwanda, issued a plan called “Keeping the Doors Open for Learning: Response Plan of Ministry of Education to the COVID-19 Outbreak”. The objectives of this plan are to:

* ensure continuity of learning for all students in Rwanda
* ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel
* protect and provide for vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities, girls, and children from lower wealth-quintiles
* prepare the resilience of the education system against future shocks.

In order to achieve those objectives, the government has allocated $39,450,000 for the next two years.

We, as Rwanda, provided radio education for children who do not have devices such as tablets, phones, computers at home. We will continue to develop more projects to help children who are deprived of their right to education or who do not have enough opportunities and financial sources.

We believe that our education system needs to be further enhanced by integrating various computer-aided teaching tools to the conventional face-to-face education. More important than that we plan to organize various social and sport activities for school children during summer across the country to eliminate to decrease negative impacts of covid-19 on their mental health.

To sum it up, children are the ones who are very vital for deciding how the world will be in the future. That’s why even a slight change would make a great difference. By the help of other nations, we are ready to do our part as Rwanda.