Global Highlights

- The COVID-19 pandemic is not slowing down and the socio-economic distress is evident around the world. In addition, other causes of humanitarian emergencies are compounding the situation.

- Conditions are worsening for the already fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen, pushing them into more complex and protracted crises. Food insecurity in parts of Africa, and the risk of La Niña weather events in the Asia Pacific, are of high concern. The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in all societies, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls.

- UNFPA is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by working to ensure continuity of sexual and reproductive health services (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, risk communication and community engagement, and provision of lifesaving supplies including contraceptives, maternal health drugs and supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

- As of September 2020, programmes by UNFPA and partners reached millions of people, including an estimated 10 million women and 5 million young people aged 10-24, in 52 countries covered by the OCHA-led global humanitarian response plan (GHRP). More results can be viewed in the latest GHRP progress report here.


Situation in Numbers

- 38,619,674 Confirmed COVID-19 Cases
- 1,093,522 COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO, 16 October 2020

Key Population Groups

- 97 M Pregnant Women
- 1.6 B Women of Reproductive Age
- 1.6 B Young People (age 10-24)
- 483 M Older Persons (age 65+)

Global Funding Status (US$)*

- Funds Allocated: 230 M
- Funding Gap: 140 M
- Funding Required: 370 M

*As of 30 September 2020
Leadership, Coordination and Partnership

At country, regional and global levels, UNFPA is coordinating efforts to reduce the spread and negative impacts of COVID-19, working with governments, other UN agencies, and NGO and private sector partners. Using an integrated “whole of organisation” coordination approach, UNFPA is responding to COVID-19 as a protracted situation, focusing on resiliency, flexibility and agility of its operational, programmes and policies. This includes strengthening preparedness capacities for future outbreaks, particularly in regions where the pandemic has not peaked. UNFPA is leading these efforts through 150 country offices, six regional offices, liaison offices and New York headquarters.

- **At the global level**, the UNFPA Executive Director participates in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals meetings that are coordinating the IASC collective COVID-19 response. The UNFPA Executive Director also participates in meetings of the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee for high-level decision making in the overall COVID-19 response. UNFPA participates at the Deputy Executive Director level in the UNSDG Task Team on the implementation of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19. The Director of the Humanitarian Office participates in the IASC Emergency Directors Group. Furthermore, UNFPA’s Humanitarian Office is fully engaged, participating in the IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) and related Reference Groups meetings, and the OCHA-led Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) process. As the lead agency of the GBV Area of Responsibility under the UNHCR-led Protection Cluster, UNFPA coordinates GBV coordination groups in 43 of 63 countries covered by the GHRP. UNFPA leads SRH working groups under the WHO-led health cluster to prioritise and coordinate SRH services and supplies.

- UNFPA collaborates with the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General on an ongoing basis to develop Secretary-General reports and briefs on COVID-19 in areas such as gender, human rights, people on the move, children, older persons, and mental health, with participation of field staff. UNFPA co-authored the health pillar of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, and provided contributions to the other pillars of social protection and basic services, economic recovery, and multilateral collaboration.

- UNFPA is a member of the WHO-led UN Crisis Management Team that provides strategic leadership on the health response, and is a member of the COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force (WHO, WFP, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR). The Task Force provides strategic direction to ensure that the most critical gaps in supplies are identified and met in a timely fashion. UNFPA is one of 13 UN agencies and NGOs for which UNICEF leads the global tender for procurement of personal protective equipment – masks, gloves, gowns and others – to cover forecasted PPE needs for the COVID-19 response. UNFPA supports the UN global initiative, Verified, to combat misinformation amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

- UNFPA works within international humanitarian and development coordination systems to ensure that the needs of women, girls and young people are included in COVID-19 guidance, response plans and country-level implementation. UNFPA’s work contributes to prevention and control of the pandemic to ensure the continuity of essential services for women, young people and vulnerable populations such as older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, ethnic minorities including Afro-descendents and indigenous people in COVID-19 affected areas. UNFPA also works to protect frontline health and social workers, 70 per cent of whom are women that need PPE.

- **At the regional and country levels**, UNFPA participates in the WHO Regional Crisis Management Group and various coordination mechanisms, including the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Coordination Team, and supports the respective national COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans ensuring integration of SRH and GBV concerns, and mitigation of social and economic impacts, including protection from GBV and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. UNFPA country offices have been spearheading various COVID-19 impact assessments on SRH and increased risk of GBV among women and girls, including those most vulnerable such as persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants.

- UNFPA offices are coordinating the procurement and logistics of humanitarian relief supplies as they relate to UNFPA’s mandate and COVID-19 response. UNFPA supports COVID-19 Humanitarian Operation Cells, or similar mechanisms, to address service delivery constraints and advocate for physical access.
GBV coordination

As the lead agency of the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) under the UNHCR-led Protection Cluster, UNFPA is leading GBV coordination groups in 43 out of the 63 countries covered by the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The GBV AoR has continued to provide support and has expanded the regional coordination teams.

To support field clusters, GBV AoR organized 6 technical and thematic sessions as part of the Global Protection Forum 2020, covering the topics below. With high participation from coordinators and other humanitarian practitioners in the field, the webinars stimulated discussion on the needs and gaps in service provision and showcased good practices from different humanitarian contexts.

- GBV/CP Coordination for Inclusion of Child and Adolescent Survivors of Sexual Violence, and Adapted Responses during COVID (In English and French)
- Cash & Voucher Assistance: The Cash for Protection Agenda & Integration of GBV Risk Mitigation in Cash (In English and French)
- GBV Risk Mitigation Integration in Protection Work (In English, French and Spanish)
- Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons in the Humanitarian Response to GBV (with Closed Captioning and Sign Interpretation)
- Preventing GBV in Humanitarian Crises: Advancing What We Know Works and Measuring GBV Outcomes (In English, French and Spanish)
- Consultation on the new Global GBV AoR Strategy

UNFPA SRH and GBV technical briefs to guide staff and partners in addressing COVID-19

- COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services
- Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage
- Implications of COVID-19 for Older Persons: Responding to the Pandemic
- Technical Brief on the Implications of COVID-19 on Census
- Adolescents and Young People & Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
- Gender Equality and Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Prevention, Protection and Response
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Modern Contraceptives and Other Medical Supply Needs, including for COVID-19 Prevention, Protection and Response.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Maternal and Newborn Health & COVID-19
- COVID-19: A Gender Lens
- Global Call to Action: Protecting Midwives to Sustain Care for Women, Newborns and their Families in the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Q&A: Adolescents, Youth and COVID-19
- Not on Pause: Responding to the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 crisis
- Invisible but not Forgotten: Risk communication and community engagement with young people left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Learning Beyond the Classroom: Adapting CSE education programming during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Equality for Girls in Crisis: Adapting child marriage and adolescent girls programming during the COVID-19 pandemic
- #youthagainstcovid-19 Campaign: All that you need to know
- Surveys and assessments on young people and COVID-19: Domains, questions and resources
UNFPA Global Response Plan to COVID-19

UNFPA's COVID-19 Global Response Plan has appealed for $370 million through the end of 2020. As of 5 October, UNFPA had received $71.5 million for COVID-19 response activities. UNFPA's top donors to the COVID-19 response include Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom, the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund. This support has enabled UNFPA to respond quickly to COVID-19 around the world. UNFPA has received $25.4 million in flexible funding, $22.2 million of which was provided through the Humanitarian Thematic Fund, UNFPA's most flexible humanitarian funding instrument.

Flexible and Quality Funding

- UNFPA uses flexible funding for onset crises, preparedness and transition settings through the Humanitarian Thematic Fund. For COVID-19, UNFPA was able to prioritize PPE needs and logistics management as the crisis evolved. This allows the allocation of resources globally based on needs, rather than relying solely on contributions earmarked at the country level. Flexible funding is also used to transport PPE and other life-saving supplies with minimal delays, overcoming logistical bottlenecks caused by the pandemic at the international and national levels.

- UNFPA continues to advocate for quality funding and better programming. In line with IASC and Grand Bargain commitments, UNFPA is committed to addressing barriers to cascading quality funding to frontline responders and to continuing to ease requirements especially in the context of COVID-19. The recent UNFPA and UN Women study on funding for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian programming underlines the current lack of a tracking mechanism for gender funding flows in humanitarian response. It shows the importance of increasing investment to close the funding gap on programming, which must leverage partnerships and leadership of women’s organisations in designing and delivering the humanitarian response.

Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector

UNFPA is engaging with private partners globally and at regional and country level in support of the COVID-19 response through partnerships for resource mobilisation, reach and the development of new technologies and innovative tools and solutions to meet immediate, medium and long-term needs. The highlights include:

Individual Giving

- The Individual Giving Programme continued its COVID-19 digital fundraising effort, with a focus on fundraising for UNFPA’s response in Yemen and Lebanon.
- On 23 September, the Programme held the first "Live from Yemen" webinar featuring UNFPA Yemen’s Humanitarian Coordinator to discuss the current situation and UNFPA’s work. The webinar was interactive and informative.
- Plans for the end-of-year campaign include raising funds for two UNFPA-supported clinics in Taizz, Yemen. The campaign will start at the end of November 2020.

Resource Mobilisation

- Over $7 million in contributions from the private sector was mobilised for UNFPA’s COVID-19 response, including in-kind donations for continuity of SRHR and GBV services during the pandemic.
The UNFPA overall response to COVID-19 aligns with the 2030 Agenda, the WHO global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, UN-coordinated Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), the UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19, and UNFPA’s COVID-19 global response plan.

The UNFPA COVID-19 regional situation reports continue to document the work of regional and country offices supporting SRH and GBV work, championing risk communications, engaging communities, particularly young people, and providing life-saving commodities and supplies. (See links below for the latest editions)

UNFPA COVID-19 Regional Situation Reports for September

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA Arab States
COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA Asia and Pacific
COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia
COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA East and Southern Africa
COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA Latin America and the Caribbean
COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8 for UNFPA West and Central Africa

© UNFPA Yemen
UNFPA September survey in countries covered by the Global Humanitarian Response Plan

GBV services

UNFPA’s September survey collected information from 1,356 GBV service delivery points in 43 GHRP countries. While interruptions have been decreasing vis-à-vis June reporting, gaps in essential GBV services remain for 293 target areas in 21 countries. The data reflects only service* availability.

Reported challenges in GBV response services include:

- Operational capacity of GBV actors has decreased due to closure of safe spaces
- Services provided through public institutions are overstretched
- Access to clinical management of rape where women need transportation is compromised
- Protection in camp settings with no services is a priority because of lockdowns
- Multi-sectoral care services are impacted because of closures or repurposing of one-stop-centres
- Access to psychosocial support and access to justice have been impacted
- Need for shelters and reduced absorptive capacity of existing shelters due to social distancing measures

*Note: Definitions of the types of services that should be provided at a minimum for the purpose of this reporting:

- a) GBV services: medical and psychosocial support services available to GBV survivors provided by any operational actor.
- b) Medical support services for GBV survivors: includes clinical management of rape, screening and treatment for intimate partner violence.
- c) Psycho-social support: must include a minimum of 2 out of the 3 following services: GBV case management, Individual psycho-social counselling and group-based psychosocial support sessions with women and girls. These services can be provided in person or remotely in adaptation to COVID-19 through helplines/hotlines, women and girls’ Safe Spaces, government social workers, among others.

Child birth in health facilities

Continuity of deliveries in health facilities has shown a slight decrease since last reporting across surveyed health facilities. While we cannot interpret all findings without further contextual information, particularly as some institutions show increases in institutional deliveries, results are nonetheless concerning for some countries where more than 50 percent of health facilities show a drop of more than 25 percent compared to the 2019 average in the same locations.

Reproductive health supplies

Since early March 2020, 45 countries have requested consignments of reproductive health kits and other pharmaceuticals, medical devices and supplies to implement life-saving SRH services.
Adolescents and youth and COVID-19

To safeguard young people's rights to health, safety, choice and voice, UNFPA has adapted and reimagined its organisational strategy, My Body My Life, My World, to the pandemic. In this series of technical briefs, My Body, My Life, My World: Through a COVID-19 Lens, UNFPA supports countries and regions in adapting and reimagining a range of interventions across contexts and through several phases of the pandemic. The package of technical briefs provide guidance in modular form, to be read and applied as a whole set or individually, depending on context.

1. Q&A: Adolescents, Youth and COVID-19 (WHO, UNFPA) - This Q&A is for adolescents to answer their questions about COVID-19 and the impacts it may have on their health and well-being.

2. Not on Pause: Responding to the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 crisis (WHO, UNFPA) - This brief sets out actions for health systems and health service providers to respond to the SRH needs of adolescents in context of the pandemic.

3. Invisible but not Forgotten: Risk communication and community engagement with young people left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic - As critical activities and institutions move online in response to the pandemic, young people living in poverty, or in isolated, hard-to-reach communities, face major access and connectivity challenges. This brief responds to these challenges by offering guidance and resources on engaging young people in risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) related to COVID-19.

4. Learning Beyond the Classroom: Adapting CSE education programming during the COVID-19 pandemic - This brief offers guidance on adapting CSE as schools remain closed, with a focus on out-of-school CSE.

5. Equality for Girls in Crisis: Adapting child marriage and adolescent girls programming during the COVID-19 pandemic - Structured around the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, this brief guides UNFPA country offices and partners to adapt their interventions during COVID-19. Recommendations focus on marginalized girls, the family and community environment, strengthening systems, addressing drivers of poverty, (e) laws and policies, and data and evidence.

6. #youthagainstCOVID19 Campaign: All that you need to know - This brief guides UNFPA country offices on engaging in the #youthagainstCOVID19 campaign. Structured in a Q&A format, it presents an overview of the content and partners of the campaign, the campaign in UNFPA's broader pandemic response and information on how to participate in the campaign, including on how to adapt it to local contexts.

7. Surveys and assessments on young people and COVID-19 - Developed in response to the rush of surveys and rapid assessments released at the start of the pandemic, this brief offers domains, questions and resources for UNFPA country offices to structure future assessments on young people and COVID-19.

Concrete implementation examples of these briefs were provided through webinars by the following countries: Albania, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, the Caribbean Sub-regional Office, Indonesia, Thailand, Jordan, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe to support learning, innovation and programme and policy improvement..
UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation

- The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in partnership with the Population and Media Center, launched a series of training workshops in September 2020 to address the implications of COVID-19 on the practice of FGM through compelling mass media activities and campaigns, using the proven social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) approach.
- These virtual workshops, which will be held in 13 countries (Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda), target UNFPA regional and country offices supported by the Joint Programme and their implementing partners.
- The topics covered include addressing FGM during COVID-19, research to program design through the use of a value grid, and storytelling through positive, negative and transitional characters. Upon completing the workshops, participants pitch their own ideas on how to incorporate the SBCC approach into their existing or planned campaigns and activities.
- Population and Media Center will support the rebroadcast of a drama series in Burkina Faso and develop two new radio serial dramas in Kenya, to reach out to the wider public virtually during COVID-19.

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage is providing technical assistance to countries in adapting programmes to guarantee adolescent girls' rights and empowerment, and supporting communities, systems and policy frameworks to be responsive to their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Publication

Adapting to COVID-19: Pivoting the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage to Respond to the Pandemic UNICEF, UNFPA (September 2020)

The health, social, political and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are disproportionately affecting girls and women by exacerbating systemic gender inequalities at all levels, with potential implications for the incidence of child marriage. This brief describes how the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage has adapted its interventions to ensure the continued reach to protect girls at risk of child marriage and already married girls during the pandemic, providing a public good and insights for practitioners around the world.

UNFPA Surge Deployment Overview

The Surge Team completed its first ever all-virtual Surge Workshop. For three weeks, 40 skilled humanitarian professionals, both internal and external experts, trained in the areas of GBV, SRH, Communications, Operations & Human Resources, and Humanitarian Coordination. With an adapted humanitarian emergency simulation and over 30 facilitators (mostly UNFPA technical experts), the virtual Surge Workshop served to increase the UNFPA Emergency Surge Roster and specifically brought on participants who are readily available to deploy to Latin America and Caribbean, given cyclone season has begun.

- In September 2020, there were 45 deployments with 11 deployed during the month: 13 were deployed to Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Cameroon, LACRO and Namibia, and 22 in the Syria-hub (Jordan), Gaziantep, Yemen, Syria, Myanmar, Nepal, Venezuela, Honduras, and Jamaica Sub-Regional Office.
- GBV profile remains the highest requested surge profile.
- Over 64% of current surge deployees come from the Global South and 56% of the deployees are female.
UNFPA raises awareness and support for prioritising the needs and rights of women and girls and marginalized groups, and continuing sexual and reproductive health and rights and prevention and response to gender-based violence during COVID-19. Here is the UNFPA COVID-19 page and below are statements of the Executive Director, and human interest stories featured on the UNFPA global website, and highlights of media outreach.

STATEMENTS

- South-South cooperation takes us further on the road to global solidarity

WEB STORIES

- Mobile health teams bring critical services to women in remote Afghanistan
- Prioritizing women’s and girls’ needs in wake of Beirut explosion
- The Rohingya influx, three years on
- Demand for Afghanistan’s midwives unflagging during COVID-19 pandemic
- Dual calamity as floods hit India’s Bihar state amid pandemic
- Against the odds, delivering mental health support in Yemen
- El Salvador begins telemedicine for pregnant women, new mothers and other priority groups
- Three things you need to know about contraceptives and COVID-19
- E-voucher system targets pregnant women and new mothers in Syria
- Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert

OPINION EDITORIALS

Inter Press Service: Central Sahel – Shaping peace together with women and young people

UNFPA IN THE NEWS*

September 1 - Reuters, Daily Mail: 'No options' for El Salvador's pregnant girls raped in lockdown
September 1 - Media Entertainment Arts Worldwide: Pregnant women with coronavirus are more likely to need intensive care and give birth early, finds study
(Probe study published by the British Medical Journal)
September 2 - Daily Mail: Reuters: Abuse victims hope Jamaica election brings long-awaited women’s shelters
September 2 - Euronews Turkish: COVID-19: Outbreak increases the number of child brides: tens of thousands of girls are forced into marriage
September 2 - Information (Denmark): Save the Children: The prospect of 13 million more child marriages as result of the pandemic requires extra effort
September 3 - VOA Korea: UN Population Fund: 330,000 dollars in aid to North Korea in the first half of this year, 380,000 women benefited
September 4 - Guardian: The girls and women fighting to stop child marriage – photo essay
September 4 - CNN Indonesia: Healthy and fun sex campaign during pandemic
September 7 - Guardian, BBC Turkey: Why COVID school closures are making girls marry early
September 7 - VN Express: 350,000 babies have no chance of being born each year
September 9 - Times of India, India Today, The Week: UN agencies support Indian govt’s efforts in dealing with coronavirus: Spokesperson
September 9 - RTP: Mónica Ferro: “Women are at the bottom of the list of priorities”
September 10 - Daily Mail: Number of abortions carried out in England and Wales since start of Covid pandemic is up by 4.1% compared to same period last year
September 10 - VOA Noticias: Venezuelan migrants may return to their country due to COVID-19 discrimination
UNFPA IN THE NEWS* (continued)

America
September 12 - El Diario: EFE: UN: Honduras must bet on sexuality education and invest in young people
September 12 - Middle East Monitor & El Arabiya: UN shuts 70% of life-saving health services in Yemen due to lack of funds
September 14 - Spiegel: How COVID-19 is indirectly killing mothers and babies
September 15 - South China Morning Post: From Australia to India and the Philippines, are coronavirus lockdowns working?
September 16 - RPP: Peru: UNFPA: Maternal deaths will increase by 45% due to the pandemic if the health system does not recover
September 16 - New York Times: A cataclysm of hunger, disease and illiteracy
September 17 - World Economic Forum: What 2020 has taught us about how to achieve universal health coverage
September 17 - Malay Mail: Malaysia’s COVID-19 recovery needs to centre on women and girls — UNFPA
September 18 - Al Jazeera: 'It ruined my life': School closures in Kenya lead to rise in FGM
September 18 - CNN Brazil: Pandemic may have driven 150 million children into poverty, says UNICEF
September 18 - EFE: No COVID-19 vaccine has a mortality rate superior than that of COVID-19
September 22 - Guardian: Australian teenager to address UN about COVID hardship among young women
September 23 - British Medical Journal: Opinion: Delivering for women, children, and adolescents during and after COVID-19
September 25 - National Public Radio: Why the pandemic could change the way we record deaths
September 25 - Europa Press: Conflicts, the climate crisis and COVID-19, great threats to the health of women and children, according to the UN
September 26 - Forbes: COVID-19, climate crisis hits health services in 50% countries
September 26 - EFE & El Diario: The UN urges to end teenage pregnancies in Latin America
September 26 - CNN Indonesia: Contraception prevents unplanned pregnancy during pandemic
September 29 - Swissinfo: AFP: Nearly 78,000 pregnant children and adolescents in Guatemala in 2020, says study
September 29 - Bloomberg, Gulf News: Surprise pregnancies in Philippines surge amid virus curbs
September 29 - CNN Philippines: Maternity deaths, unplanned pregnancies, domestic violence worsen amid pandemic in PH – groups
September 30 - France 24, Radio France Internationale, Daily Mail, TV5 Monde, RTL: AFP: Terrified mothers-to-be adjust after Beirut blast
September 30 - Sputnik (Russia): Quarantine has led to an increase in accidental pregnancies in the Philippines
September 30 - The Times (UK): Baby boom warning as lockdowns restrict access to contraception

*The inclusion of articles does not imply endorsement by UNFPA. UNFPA cannot vouch for the accuracy of any of the reports.