Regional Highlights

- The total number of COVID-19 positive cases have reached over 177,800 in all 23 countries in West and Central Africa, four months after Nigeria reported the first case. By the end of July, there were nearly 2,845 deaths, a mortality rate of about 1.6 per cent. About 28.4% of patients were still under treatment, while 70% had recovered.

- The pandemic continues to spread at an average rate of 1,477 new cases per day over the last seven days. Four countries are leading with caseloads: Nigeria (44,129), Ghana (37,812), Cameroon (17,255) and Côte d'Ivoire (16,220).

- Chad and Burkina Faso have the highest percentage of recovery, 90% and 87% respectively, while Chad and Niger have the highest case fatality rates, 8.5% and 6.2%.

- Health personnel continue to be alarmingly affected; 5,871 positive cases have been reported. Ghana (2,065), Nigeria (987) and Cameroon (593) have the most affected health personnel.

- UNFPA is working with governments and partners to ensure continuity of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) services, protect health workers and prevent and control COVID-19 infection.

- 16,458 safe deliveries were recorded in UNFPA-supported facilities in Senegal, Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone. Over 111,964 women and youth utilised integrated SRH services in UNFPA-supported facilities in the region; 2,260 contact-tracers were trained and deployed: 1,500 women and girls subjected to violence, including those with disabilities, accessed essential services (health, social, police and justice).

Situation in Numbers

- 179,322 Confirmed COVID-19 Cases
- 2,873 COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO 5 August 2020

Key Population Groups

- 13 M Pregnant Women
- 108 M Women of Reproductive Age
- 148 M Young People (age 10-24)
- 13 M Older Persons (age 65+)

Funding Status for Region (US$)

- Total Required: 59.3 M
- Funds Allocated: 31.6 M
- Funding Gap: 27.7 M

Source: UNFPA

UNFPA continues to participate in weekly meetings of the Regional UN Sustainable Development Group for West and Central Africa, attended by Regional Directors, to coordinate the UN response to the pandemic. The health, humanitarian and socio-economic challenges, brought about by the pandemic, require solidarity for a global response. There are three critical and complementary components of UN efforts to save lives, protect people and rebuild better:


- **The health response**, led by WHO and detailed in the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP), to support public health measures to stop the transmission of the virus and care for those affected. The adapted SPRP in the region has six pillars of the public health response: 1) Country-level coordination, planning and monitoring; 2) Risk communication and community engagement; 3) Surveillance, laboratories and points of entry; 4) Rapid response teams; 5) Infection prevention and control and case management; and 6) Operational support and logistics.

- **The UN Framework** for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, to mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, focuses on supporting governments and communities through five work streams: 1) Protecting health services and systems; 2) Social protection and basic services; 3) Protecting jobs and small- and medium-sized enterprises; 4) Macroeconomic choices and international cooperation and multilateralism; and 5) Social cohesion and community resilience.

- In July, UNFPA carried out strategic interventions based on a series of meetings held with country offices from 22 – 26 June, by the WCARO Women and Reproductive Health Unit (WRHU) on “Sexual and reproductive health and rights: Key for achieving the three transformative results” (ending unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths, and ending GBV and harmful practices against women and girls by 2030). Discussions focused on leveraging flagship initiatives including the Maternal Health Thematic Fund; UNFPA Supplies / Matching Fund Grants; the Fonds Français Muskoka (FFM), which enables four United Nations agencies – UNFPA, WHO, UN-Women and UNICEF – working in eight countries in West and Central Africa to pool their technical expertise to conduct high-impact interventions in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF); and the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) initiative initiated by six countries with the UN and the World Bank Group. Countries shared experiences on COVID-19, with a focus on advancing maternal Health, family planning, adolescent and youth well-being, sexual and reproductive health, and prevention of HIV.
1. **Continuity of SRH services and interventions, including protection of health workforce**

- In 17 countries in the region, UNFPA is leading life-saving SRH services through the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health in emergencies.
- 111,964 women and youth utilised integrated SRH services in UNFPA-supported facilities in Liberia (62,800), Senegal (42,832), Sierra Leone (3,189), Guinea-Bissau (2,002), and Benin (1,141).
- In 11 countries, there is functional emergency obstetric and newborn care coverage, per international recommended minimum standards (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome & Principes, Senegal and Togo).
- In seven countries, UNFPA is leading national contact-tracing and case monitoring (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Senegal).
- 16,458 safe deliveries were facilitated in UNFPA-supported facilities in Benin (3,647), Guinea-Bissau (114), Senegal (7,779), Sierra Leone (2,330) and Togo (2,588).
- 2,260 contact-tracers were trained and deployed with UNFPA support in Cabo Verde (60), Liberia (447), Niger (92) and Senegal (1,661).
- 2,662 contacts were traced with UNFPA support in Gambia (789) and Liberia (1873).

**Country examples:**

- **Burkina Faso:** UNFPA organised capacity building sessions on Gender-based Violence (GBV) in emergency situations in the context of COVID-19, for 30 community support technicians and 40 humanitarian actors from the Center-North regions and the Sahel. To bring services closer to the people, a neonatal center, in Tenkodogo regional hospital, opened its doors with support from UNFPA. During the month of July, workshop sessions were conducted with students from private basic training schools to practice family planning modules and ensure integration of prevention measures for COVID-19.

- **Cameroon:** UNFPA was able to provide large quantities of hygiene and sanitation materials and personal protective equipment (PPE) to maternity hospitals in 106 health facilities in the Far North, North, Adamaua and East regions, with financial resources received from the Islamic Development Bank. UNFPA Cameroon carried out training sessions on medical and surgery care for obstetric fistula targeting four teams of 24 health professionals based in Garoua, in the North, and in Kousseri, in the Far North. Despite the prevalence of COVID-19, two obstetric fistula medical treatment campaigns took place in these two localities benefitting 40 women. UNFPA Cameroon conducted two dialogue sessions with leading civil society groups as part of the UN75 Dialogue Initiative. The first took place on 2 July with the Cameroon Women for Peace Network (CAWOPEM), of women engaged in the promotion of peace and the fight against gender-based violence. Jointly with UNESCO, UNFPA held a second session of UN75 Dialogue, involving five networks of young leaders associations, led by the youth network, AfriYAN.

- **Cabo Verde:** In a joint initiative with UNESCO, UNFPA Cabo Verde country office launched a contest, “Gender Labyrinth”. Research projects were submitted to construct an art installation, in maze format, under the theme: Awareness raising and promotion of gender equality in Cabo Verde, by students up to the age of 35, attending a Degree or Master's degree from Cabo Verde's universities. It is estimated that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of GBV in Cabo Verde increased by 8%. Aiming to strengthen the response to GBV (with a focus on prevention, early detection, reporting of cases and adequate psychosocial support), training was conducted for 85% of sexual and reproductive health technicians and GBV case workers, at national level. With this activity, the Ministry of Health, and Social Security, in partnership with the Institute of Cape Verde for Gender Equality and Equity (ICIEG) in collaboration with UNFPA, hopes to improve the quality of care provided to survivors of GBV, contribute to law enforcement, and harmonize guidelines and procedures.

- **Central African Republic:** UNFPA trained 40 Reproductive Health (RH) service providers on COVID-19 prevention and continuity of services. The commitment process for the purchase of kits for organizations of young people and people living with HIV is underway. The materials for the call center were purchased and handed over to the Ministry of Health; coordination meetings were held.
Regional Response Summary continued

- **Mali:** With the support of its financial partners, UNFPA Mali availed the Ministry of Health US $1,153,516 to support the modeling of the response plan to COVID-19 in terms of national coordination, planning, monitoring, surveillance, prevention/control of infection at points of entry and case management. UNFPA continues its collaboration with WHO tracing contacts in the communes of the Bamako district and jointly supporting epidemiological surveillance at the national level (data collection through DHS2). UNFPA supported the Gabriel Toure Hospital by setting up 3 prefabricated containers for hospitalization of COVID-19 cases.

- **Niger:** As part of the fight against Covid-19, UNFPA Niger, together with UNHCR, supported the Government of Niger to set up two outpatient treatment centres in Niamey and Tahoua with a capacity of 100 beds and 60 beds respectively. UNFPA also deployed 150 doctors to support the Ministry of Health in case management and surveillance. To ensure the continuity of health services, particularly at the maternity level, UNFPA Niger supported 52 health centres with PPEs, enabling health workers to provide services in complete safety.

- **Sierra Leone:** UNFPA Sierra Leone is supporting the establishment of isolation centres in the five CEmOC facilities in Sierra Leone. In June, the centre at the Princess Christian Maternity Hospital in Freetown was finalised. These centres are equipped with delivery beds, hospital beds, delivery equipment and supplies. The isolation centres will be operated by midwives trained in infection prevention and control.

2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence

- In 16 countries, UNFPA is leading GBV prevention and response coordination mechanisms.
- In 13 countries, there is an alert mechanism in place to identify and report cases of GBV.
- 1,415 women and girls subjected to violence, including those with disabilities, have accessed essential services (health, social, police and justice) in Burkina Faso (117), Cabo Verde (58), Cameroon (217), Chad (590) and Togo (433).

**Country examples:**

- **Burkina Faso:** UNFPA organized two meetings of the GBV sub-cluster, developed and updated the mapping of post-rape kits and undertook a rapid assessment on GBV and COVID-19 in five humanitarian regions.

- **Cameroon:** UNFPA Cameroon made public the results of the impact of the COVID-19 on the efforts invested in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in the regions of its humanitarian response in the North West, South West and Far North of Cameroon. A webinar session, organized by the Regional Office on the 8th July 2020 in collaboration with the Cameroon CO and the Mali CO (where a similar initiative was taken), highlighted the devastating impact of the pandemic on the efforts undertaken to fight against gender based violence in both countries. In Cameroon for instance, 62% of responders to the survey observed an increase in cases of gender-based violence, while 99% said they would lack the resources to mitigate the risks of GBV in case the measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 subsist.

- **Central African Republic:** 65 GBV case managers benefited from the cascade training on case management in the localities of Bambari, Bria and Kaga-bandoro.

- **Gambia:** The UN Gender Technical Working Group, led by UNFPA, started a 5-day training of trainers on 21 July on GBV Case Management to support social workers, GBV case managers and civil society organizations (CSOs). The training aimed at building the skills of participants to effectively employ a survivor-centered approach to GBV victims and survivors in The Gambia. With the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline health workers, persons in quarantine and treatment centres, and families are challenged with new realities that threaten the health, wellness and security of all people. To help mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the Ministry of Health with support from UNFPA, on 14 July, organised a training on The Gambia’s Psychosocial Support Referral Pathway to institutions and organisations providing MHPSS services. The referral pathway is meant to streamline service provision and reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic by strengthening the relationship between all actors in the MHPSS response mechanism and ensuring the provision of the best possible care to those in need.
2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence cont.

- **Ghana:** UNFPA Ghana commemorated World Population Day, highlighting the need to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in collaboration with the National Population Council (NPC) and Marie Stopes Ghana on 17 July. The UNFPA Ghana collaborated with Government partners, traditional leaders, civil society and youth groups to advance the issues of equality, justice, fairness and the need to eliminate harmful practices affecting girls, including child marriage, female genital mutilation and also preference for having male children over females. UNFPA GHANA has fostered partnership with Prudential Life Insurance Ghana (PLIG) to work together towards building resilient communities. The $35,000 received from PLIG enabled efforts to ensure the Kayayei (Head Porters) are provided with the necessary items to protect them against COVID-19, increase income-generating skills and information and education on sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNFPA GHANA in partnership with Glitz Africa held the 5th SHE Summit virtually on 16 July under the theme, “Resilient, Empowered: Her Rights, Her World”. The insightful virtual conversation gathered over 300 participants from over 40 countries to listen to prominent women such as the Minister of Communications of Ghana. This was an advocacy platform to address gender inequality, including the surge in violence against women and girls (including cyber violence) since the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN Youth Group in Ghana, under the leadership of UNFPA Ghana, organized the fourth Youth Impact Series on the theme, Leaving No One Behind: The Role of Young People in Slums/Informal Settlements in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery. The webinar explored ways to stimulate conversations among and concerning young people for COVID-19 response and recovery. Over 180 participants joined from more than eight countries.

- **UNFPA Benin, Ghana, and Togo** organised the maiden edition of the joint inter-country youth dialogue, Youth2Youth, also known as the Y2Y Common Talk as part of activities to mark the post-2020 State of World Population report launch. The theme was “Amplifying Innovation and the Voices of Young Girls in the Fight Against COVID-19”. Over 1000 participants joined the virtual event both on Zoom and Facebook live. The event was aimed at discussing young people’s innovation and initiatives to tackle the sexual reproductive health and rights challenges of young people within these countries.

- **Liberia:** UNFPA is supporting 12 one-stop centers in Liberia, and a total of 440 GBV cases were managed. The Liberia Country Office supported the Government of Liberia to revise the Public Law to include a Chapter on SRHR including access to family planning services by adolescents without parental consent, and access to safe abortion care for women and girls. UNFPA Liberia supported the continuity of an integrated package of SRHR services through 31 health facilities and 20 community outreach sites in four counties. From April to June, a total of 39,891 adolescents and women were reached. The Liberia Country Office brought in a consignment of RH commodities and essential drugs in July to support routine SRHR service provision. The CO also procured IPC supplies and PPEs, locally to protect service providers. Financial support was also provided to the Government to ensure last mile delivery of commodities and essential drugs.

- **Mali:** UNFPA improved knowledge around COVID-19 through the Study on the impact of COVID-19 on GBV in Mali (SNU, UNFPA-Mali.). UNFPA provided supplies for the GBV One-Stop Centers in Bamako, Gao and Mopti. In addition, UNFPA Mali provided material support for barrier measures for the One Stop Centers and the Sikasso Women’s House to ensure the continuum of holistic services to people who survive GBV during the COVID-19 period.

- **Niger:** Given the increase in GBV cases observed during the pandemic, UNFPA Niger signed two strategic partnerships with the National Police and the Gendarmerie. This partnership aims at strengthening the capacities of these two bodies, which have units for the protection of women and minors in their mission to detect cases and refer them to appropriate services. Also with the support of the Spotlight Initiative, which operates in three of the regions most affected by the humanitarian crisis, a mechanism was established to strengthen the network of traditional chiefs with grassroots community actors and various care services. This network will reach 262 villages with more than 300 traditional chiefs at the center of the initiative, which are strongly involved in referring GBV cases to the different service delivery points (health, police, justice, etc.). In the framework of data collection, two other regions are added to Diffa for data sharing according to GVB IMS and a mapping for two other regions is in progress.
2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence cont.

- **Senegal**: To mark World Population Day, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation, in partnership with UNFPA, organized on July 10 a panel by videoconference where 125 participants participated in the discussions to respond to COVID-19, and reproductive health strategies to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls during the pandemic. This was followed by a Facebook event on 11 July (1,900 views) as part of the #Jogcicovid19 digital campaign targeting youth. More than 7,000 brochures on prevention and barrier gestures, Islam and Corona religious arguments, 45,000 pieces of soap and 6,000 bottles of liquid soap were distributed to 266 villages of Kolda, Sédhiou, Tambacounda and Tambacounda Prison by the NGO TOSTAN with funding from the joint programme for accelerating the elimination of FGM. 9120 young adolescents were made aware of barrier gestures and received protective equipment. A total of 18,750 masks were distributed, and 10,517 young people benefited from information on COVID 19, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and GBV / FGM.

- **Sierra Leone**: UNFPA Sierra Leone established and fully equipped a one-stop GBV center in the King Harman Maternal and Child Health hospital in Freetown with the generous support of Irish Aid and the Government of China. UNFPA continued to ensure the availability of free counselling and clinical services to GBV survivors through our implementing partner Rainbo Initiative at the centres in Bo and Freetown. In June, 236 individuals received services, including four people living with disabilities. With funding from Irish Aid, UNFPA Sierra Leone is supporting the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to air life-skills sessions on the Radio Teaching Programme, based on the national life-skills manual “I am somebody”. The programme, aired three - five days per week, aims to reach both in and out of school adolescents. To increase access to the radio programme, UNFPA Sierra Leone is distributing radios to vulnerable adolescent girls. To date, a total of 1000 radios have been distributed, including 695 radios in June in the Kambia district.

- **Togo**: The Togolese Government, with the support of UNFPA Togo, celebrated from 6 to 12 July, the launch of the State of World Population Report 2020 and the celebration of World Population Day 2020. The week was marked by an intensification of the provision of SRH services, including GBV services. The Minister of Development Planning and Cooperation, together with the Director of Population Studies and the Resident Representative of UNFPA TOGO, chaired a virtual conference on the situation of GBV in Togo on Friday 17 July, as a culmination of Population Week. It was a reflection on the innovative actions required to guarantee the continuity of integrated service delivery to Women and Girls especially in terms of protection of this target group against GBV exacerbated during this period of COVID-19.

3. Ensuring the supply of modern contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities

- There is a significant risk of contraceptive stockouts in four countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Gambia, Mauritania).
- 645,930 couple-years of protection for contraceptives were procured by UNFPA, including condoms in Benin (41,152), Chad (203,583), Senegal (281,195) and Sierra Leone (120,000).

Country examples:

- **Burkina Faso**: UNFPA supported the opening of a neonatal center in Tenkodogo Regional Hospital to bring services closer to the people.

- **Central African Republic**: UNFPA distributed 90 hand-washing kits, 90 boxes of soap, 70 boxes of gloves and 138 boxes of face masks in humanitarian areas through NGOs (Coheb, IMC, MDA, AHA).

- **Gambia**: UNFPA is supporting the initiative of “My body, my choice!” in the face of COVID-19 by providing the needed resources and services to build a conducive environment for women and girls to make informed choices about their lives, bodies and well-being. With projections of an increase in unintended pregnancies and violence against women and girls during this COVID-19 period, UNFPA reiterates the need to focus on the immediate needs of women. On 3 July, UNFPA The Gambia presented essential reproductive health commodities to The Gambia Central Medical Store to support the country’s response to COVID-19. UNFPA The Gambia on 21 July, following a needs analysis presented food and hygiene supplies as well as baby items to the National COVID-19 Treatment Centre for the expectant mothers and their unborn child.
- **Ghana**: UNFPA GHANA supported the Tamale Central Hospital and the Mercy Women’s Hospital (Mankessim) with 700 PPEs and 100 modified Dignity Kits (including face masks and hand sanitizers) procured to support health workers and mothers in the maternity wings, to ensure the protection of health care providers as they ensure the continuity of maternal health services amidst the pandemic. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, UNFPA GHANA, in partnership with Ecobank Ghana Limited and Tobinco Pharmaceuticals Ghana Limited, supported the State School for the deaf in Ashaiman. UNFPA supported the school with 300 Dignity Kits, including face masks, as well as Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on adolescent sexual and reproductive health. This way, the championing of the safety and dignity of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, through the provision of dignity kits, information and services on SRH and GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic is ensured.

- **Mali**: UNFPA Mali produced the magazine Population of Africa Special Covid-19 broadcast on TV5. UNFPA Mali Representative made an advocacy statement on the first national television ORTM1 on COVID-19 and empowerment of women within the framework of the Pan-African Women on July 31.

- **Niger**: UNFPA Niger carried out a major donation of RH kits, as well as materials and equipment for the implementation of EmONU functions for the benefit of more than 100 health centres. UNFPA Niger has benefited from capacity building of the RH working group under the leadership of the Ministry of Health on comprehensive RH services in crisis situations. This training of trainers of 8 participants will be scaled up throughout the country. Niger launched the "Last Mile Mobile Solution" initiative in partnership with the international NGO World Vision. It is an approach that is perfectly adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic and will allow a rational use of resources, better quality in data collection and better traceability of RH service beneficiaries.

- **Senegal**: UNFPA supported the Matam region by training 13 health personnel in SONU monitoring.

- **Sierra Leone**: In June and July, with support from the Government of Iceland, 905 Mama and Baby packs were distributed to encourage expectant mothers to deliver in facilities with skilled support. Each Mama-baby bag contains hygiene and essential products for new mothers including bathing soap, washing detergent, towels, sanitary pads, hand sanitizers, face masks and underwear, as well as items for baby including wipes, soap, diapers, blankets, towels, wrappers, baby clothes, socks and caps.

- **Togo**: UNFPA TOGO, through the Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health/HIV component of its programme, supported 20 facilities including 18 school infirmaries through the Division of Adolescent and Youth Health with handwashing and soap devices. The official handover took place on Friday 10 July at Tokoin 1 High School. This equipment should enable the school infirmaries to ensure in this period of pandemic the continuity of services for students, namely curative care, provision of contraceptive methods, management of sexually transmitted infections and Information Education Communication/Communication for Behavioural Change activities.
UNFPA raises awareness, shares guidance and showcases achievements through media outreach.

The Regional Office continues to participate in the regional working group on Risk Communications and Community Engagement, with UNICEF as lead and WHO as co-lead. The group is running a media campaign to raise awareness on COVID-19 response through a multilingual website. The website includes some local languages mostly spoken by people across the region. It is also undertaking a social research aimed at generating quality information and insights into how risk communication and community engagement activities could be better framed, packaged and delivered to enhance the response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Country examples:

- **Burkina Faso:**
  - [https://burkinafaso.unfpa.org/fr/news/promotion-de-l%C3%A9limination-des-mutilations-genitales-f%C3%A9minines-mgf-au-burkina-faso-le-pr%C3%A9sident](https://burkinafaso.unfpa.org/fr/news/promotion-de-l%E9limination-des-mutilations-genitales-f%E9minines-mgf-au-burkina-faso-le-pr%E9sident)
  - Production de contenu sur les innovations au Burkina Faso dans le cadre de ma la COVID-19 dans le Numéro 5 du Mensuel QGJEUNE MAG [https://www.qgjeune.org/magazine-n5/](https://www.qgjeune.org/magazine-n5/)
  - Diffusion de messages de sensibilisation sur la COVID-19 dans les émissions radio Allo les jeunes: [https://www.qgjeune.org/radios/#1585946421736-4](https://www.qgjeune.org/radios/#1585946421736-4)

- **Cabo Verde:**
  - [https://www.facebook.com/labirintodegenero/](https://www.facebook.com/labirintodegenero/)

- **Gambia:**

- **Ghana:**

- **Niger:**
  - [https://drive.google.com/a/unfpa.org/uc?id=11hVpmWz5bnMscrLMb4BfX_iE_A1YG2p&export=download](https://drive.google.com/a/unfpa.org/uc?id=11hVpmWz5bnMscrLMb4BfX_iE_A1YG2p&export=download)

- **Sierra Leone:**
Country examples:

- **Senegal:**
  - Ralentir la propagation de la COVID-19 : comment protéger la santé et les droits des femmes et des filles à l’heure actuelle
  - https://web.facebook.com/unfpasenegal/videos/729444871220800

- **Togo:**
  - https://www.facebook.com/442639269226373/posts/1703318796491741/
  - https://www.facebook.com/442639269226373/posts/1724920344331586/
  - https://www.facebook.com/442639269226373/posts/1724168664406754/
  - https://www.sante-education.tg/article/35211360227646026
## Confirmed Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 04 August 2020

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