



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWSLETTER

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UNFPA's Emergency Response to COVID-19:

Leaving No One Behind, Including Women, Girls, Pregnant Women, and Older Persons

In this issue, we would like to present a newsletter released by UNFPA Tokyo Office on the subject of UNFPA's efforts in responding to COVID-19.

Even though the COVID-19 state of emergency was lifted in Japan, the situation remains uncertain for much of the rest of the world. In particular, there are concerns that COVID-19 will do significant damage in countries with weak health systems such as African countries.

The crisis is having a calamitous impact on women, girls, pregnant women, and older persons. This issue aims to share efforts made by UNFPA to protect such vulnerable people amid the spread of COVID-19.

Information is also available at the website below. Please check it out!

[<UNFPA Tokyo Office - Special page on COVID-19>](#)

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1. Impacts of COVID-19 on women, girls, pregnant women, and older persons

[Impacts on women and girls]

UNFPA predicts calamitous impact on women's and girl's health as COVID-19 pandemic continues.

- 47 million women in 114 low- and middle-income countries may not be able to access modern contraceptives, and 7 million unintended pregnancies are expected to occur if the lockdown carries on for 6 months and there are major disruptions to health services.
- 31 million additional cases of gender-based violence (GBV) can be expected to occur if the lockdown continues for at least 6 months.

The above predictions were reported in Japan in [the Asahi Shimbun](#), [the Mainichi Shimbun](#), and [SankeiBiz](#), among others.

For more information on the “calamitous effect on women and girls,” click [here](#) .

For more information on the COVID-19 pandemic and GBV, click [here](#) .

[Impacts on pregnant women]

Pregnant women have to give birth and raise their children amid fears of COVID-19 infection. Many women are refraining from visiting health facilities due to fears about COVID-19 exposure or due to movement restrictions, depriving them of appropriate antenatal/postnatal care and childbirth care.

[Impacts on older persons]

Older people are at greater risk of severe cases of COVID-19 infection. They are also at risk of being neglected or subjected to violence from family members or caregivers and of becoming isolated from society.

UNFPA has prepared [a technical brief](#) highlighting relevant initiatives underway for protecting older persons amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which is utilized by various governments. UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office organized [an online seminar](#) on 4 June 2020 to discuss issues of older persons amid COVID-19 in Japan and other Asian countries.

2. UNFPA’s efforts against COVID-19

UNFPA is supporting countries with weak health systems to meet their needs in response to COVID-19 in ways, including the following:

- Delivering infection-control supplies including personal protective equipment;
- Establishing hotlines and shelters for protecting victims of gender-based violence;
- Providing online contraception counseling;
- Supporting measures for preventing older persons from becoming isolated;
- Providing information about COVID-19 to refugees and migrants; and
- Supporting training for healthcare providers such as midwives to provide safe care amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The above activities are based on the following three priorities in the [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic UNFPA Global Response Plan](#):

- ① Continuity of sexual and reproductive health services and interventions, including protection of the health workforce;
- ② Addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices; and
- ③ Ensuring the supply of modern contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities



The activities, moreover, are carried out in collaboration with WHO and other United Nations organizations.

[Case example: UNFPA supports heroes fighting on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis]

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, midwives have been protecting the lives of newborns on the front lines in healthcare facilities. However, midwives are risking their own lives and wellbeing, and in [Iran](#), three midwives lost their lives due to COVID-19.

In war-torn Yemen, a woman gave birth to triplets amid the COVID-19 outbreak. She was experiencing the joy of birth as well as concerns about raising her children in the midst of the spread of the disease. In particular, in [Yemen](#) and other countries in conflict, mothers bear insecurities both from the conflict and COVID-19 pandemic. Midwives are protecting such mothers.

UNFPA is also continuing other efforts in various countries to “leave no one behind” amid COVID-19. For more detail, please click [here](#).

3. Request for donations

Globally, women make up about 70% of the healthcare workforce. While facing inequality and other barriers and being exposed to the risk of infection, they today are at the front lines in the fight against COVID-19. UNFPA is working to protect women’s health and rights amid the COVID-19 pandemic. However, sufficient funding has not yet been secured.

UNFPA is accepting donations from the public and would appreciate it if you would consider supporting in this effort. For donations for emergency response to COVID-19, please click [here](#).

UNFPA Tokyo Office

<p>With 8,175 yen</p>  <p>Provides 15 lifesaving kits to ensure mothers are able to bring their babies into the world</p>	<p>With 43,600 yen</p>  <p>Provides a midwife with all they need to support 20 women through the safe delivery of their child</p>
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For back issues, please visit: <http://www.apda.jp/en/index.html>

