



Reporting Period: 1 - 30 September 2020

West and Central Africa Region

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 8

United Nations Population Fund



Regional Highlights

- The total number of COVID-19 positive cases has reached over 232,854 in all 23 countries in West and Central Africa, after Nigeria reported the first case earlier in the year. By the end of September 2020, there were 3,603 deaths, with a mortality rate of about 1.6%. A little over 22,000 (9.6%) patients were still under treatment, while 88.9% had recovered.
- The pandemic continues to spread at a much slower rate. The five countries with the highest confirmed caseloads are: Nigeria (59,345), Ghana (46,829), Cameroon (20,875), Côte d'Ivoire (19,849) and Senegal (15,094).
- Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Sao Tome and Principe have the highest percentage of recovery: 98.5% 97.8% and 97.3% respectively, while Chad and Liberia have the highest case fatality rates, 7.1% and 6.1%.
- Health worker infections continue to increase gradually with 8,384 infections reported in 22 WCA countries since the beginning of the outbreak. Nigeria remains the most affected, with 2,175 health workers infected, followed by Ghana (2,065), Cameroon (808), Guinea (513), Equatorial Guinea (429), Senegal (349) and Guinea-Bissau (282).
- UNFPA supports continuity of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) services, with 16,458 safe deliveries recorded in UNFPA-supported facilities in Benin, Togo, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Over 111,964 women and youth accessed SRH integrated services in UNFPA-supported facilities in the region; 2,960 contact-tracers were trained and deployed: 2,254 women and girls subjected to gender-based violence, including those with disabilities, accessed essential services (health, social, police and justice).

Situation in Numbers

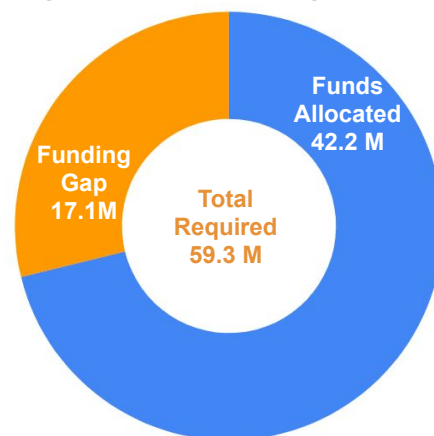


Source: WHO, 5 October 2020

Key Population Groups



Funding Status for Region (US\$)



Regional coordination and partnerships

UNFPA's response in the region aligns with the [2030 Agenda](#), [WHO global strategic preparedness and response plan](#), [UN-coordinated global humanitarian response plan](#), the [UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), and the [UNFPA COVID-19 global response plan](#).

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.

Three critical and complementary components of UN efforts are to save lives, protect people and build back better.

- The humanitarian response, as detailed in the OCHA-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, focuses on responding to immediate health and multi-sectoral humanitarian needs in particularly vulnerable countries.
- The health response, led by WHO and detailed in the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP), focuses on supporting public health measures to stop the transmission of the virus and to 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) ensuring social protection and basic services; 3) protecting jobs and small- and medium-sized enterprises; 4) supporting macroeconomic choices and international cooperation and multilateralism; and 5) enhancing social cohesion and community resilience.

UNFPA leadership on data and evidence to better inform decisions

- In **Cabo Verde**, youth contribute to the fight against COVID-19 through the YouthConnekt-CV initiative. Young people make their contributions in the fight against COVID-19 through information and awareness-raising actions among their peers and their community in general. This is an initiative of the Institute of Sports and Youth and the Joint United Nations Office. In this context, on 22 and 23 September, a training was held for 120 young leaders and volunteers as promoters of change with innovative tools adapted to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main objective was to promote local action, seeking impact in the national campaign COVID ZERO, "One for all, all for Zero". This national campaign will last for three months, and will involve the municipalities of Praia, Santa Cruz and Sal, which were chosen as the pilot experience. This is an initiative of the Government of Cabo Verde as part of



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 accessed 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, emergency obstetric and newborn care as per international recommended minimum standards is guaranteed thanks to UNFPA's support. (These countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal and Togo).
- In 7 countries, UNFPA is leading the national COVID-19 contact-tracing and case monitoring mechanisms (these countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Senegal).
- At least 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).
- Some 2,960 contact-tracers were trained and deployed with UNFPA support in Burkina Faso (700), 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:

- **Cabo Verde:** To ensure the continuity of HIV services in the COVID-19 pandemic context, the Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS (CCS/SIDA) and UNFPA advocated to guarantee essential HIV services at the national level. A national directive from the National Health Direction to all health structures was issued to guarantee that all health personnel conforms to these standards. Persons living with HIV networks, Associação Abraço and Peers Educators were trained virtually on Risk Communication and Community Engagement on HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 prevention at national level, reaching 57 civil society activists. In September 2020, Cabo Verde procured tests kits and other HIV/AIDS consumables through the UNFPA Procurement Services Branch, and with UNFPA Country Office support.
- **Cameroon:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to accelerate the pledge to reach its three transformative results, UNFPA equipped public health institutions with high technology equipment to perform teleworking and telemedicine and apply social distancing and protect health workers in the area of maternal health. Direct beneficiaries are staff from 52 health centers, staff from the Division of Family Health at the Ministry of Public Health as well as that from the Center for Emergency Management in Public Health Operations of the Ministry of Public Health.
- **Ghana:** UNFPA partnered with the National Youth Authority (NYA) to host a workshop dubbed "Reprotalk Review" to promote dialogue on issues pertaining to SRH, especially on thematic areas such as relationships, sexual education, early pregnancies, general lifestyle, STI/HIV & COVID-19 preventive measures. Reprotalk is a mobile application development platform for young people to access SRH information and services. UNFPA Ghana continued its support to Kayayei (female head of household through the Kayayei Assistance Project (KASPRO), providing empowerment opportunities, mentorship and SRH information and services to this vulnerable population at the Tema Station in Accra. This support is particularly crucial during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Liberia:** A total of 12,257 adolescents and women were reached with SRH services in two of the eight counties supported by UNFPA.
- **Mali:** About 6,500 women and girls of reproductive age received dignity kits, including personal protective items to prevent COVID-19. During the reporting period, 270 participants from different sectors (health, justice and PSS specialists) improved their capacities to provide GBV and SRH services (MISP, PSS and case management training) including how to collect ethical and reliable data using the GBVIMS system to support better GBV programming and advocacy.

1. Continuity of SRH services and interventions (continued).

- **Senegal:** With the support of the Government of Luxembourg, 75 Bajenu Gox, 'Godmothers', including 25 in each of the three health districts were trained on Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR) in the Fatick region. With the support of the Government of Canada, UNFPA provided personal protective equipment and medical materials to the Epidemics Treatment Center in the Kédougou region. Under the supervision of the Tambacounda Youth Center, 3 girls' clubs offered advanced RH strategies, distributing 215 masks and 238 condoms and conducting HIV testing of 114 young adolescents, and conducted focus groups on marriages and pregnancies, early childhood, HIV and menstrual hygiene, which reached 277 adolescents. 112 blood bags were collected during the blood donation day organized by the Tambacounda medical region to address the stock out of blood supplies and contribute to the reduction of related maternal deaths.
- **Sierra Leone:** Through support from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, former DFID)-funded Saving Lives programme to Doctors with Africa (CUAMM), in July and August, UNFPA Sierra Leone supported maternal health services in three of the five main referral hospitals. The safe deliveries supported were as follows: 972 at Princess Christian Maternal Hospital; 421 at Bo Hospital; and 420 at Makeni hospital. A total of 660 mama and baby packs were distributed to encourage pregnant women to deliver in facilities with skilled support. These packs were distributed to seven hospital maternity wards within Sierra Leone.
- **Togo:** On Friday, 11 September 2020, UNFPA Togo handed over 298 pieces of PPE to the national committee for the management of COVID-19 material and response equipment. These PPEs are intended for maternity hospitals in Togo. On Tuesday, 15 September 2020 UNFPA officially launched a project on the continuity of maternal health services during COVID-19 at the Regional Hospital Center of Tsévié, co-financed by the Japanese bio-pharmaceutical firm TAKEDA, for the amount of 1,430,000 US dollars. This project aims to ensure the provision of maternal and neonatal health services during the COVID-19 pandemic to at least 68,250 women and newborns, including 11,078 women facing life-threatening obstetric complications. The nine-month project will protect staff working in targeted maternity hospitals from COVID-19, ensure a safe environment for COVID-19-free maternity hospitals and thus strengthen the delivery of maternal and neonatal health services during the pandemic period. 360 over-blouses, 12,700 masks, a hundred oilcloth aprons, 3,800 headgear, shoes and equipment such as 2 tents of 42m2 for the extension of treatment rooms are intended for the health facilities in the maritime region as part of this project. In addition, on 21 and 22 September 2020, 36 health care providers were trained in community monitoring and contact tracing. This was the first of a series of activities to support community health workers and civil society organisations in contact tracing to halt the spread of COVID-19. Co-financed by the Canadian Local Initiative Fund #FCIL and the agencies of the United Nations System in Togo under the coordination of the Office of the Resident Coordinator, this project aims to strengthen the capacities of community structures in the health districts of Sotouboua, Tchaoudjo and Tchamba in the Central Region and Tandjouaré, Oti Sud and Cinkassé in the Savannah Region. Finally, on 23-25 September 2020, 360 Community Health Workers and 360 members of local monitoring committees in the Central and Savannah regions benefited from a refresher course on the concepts of community monitoring and COVID-19 contact tracing.



UNFPA Sierra Leone:
Memunatu speaks with health workers while she recovers in the high-dependency unit at Princess Christian Maternity Hospital.
©UNFPA Sierra Leone

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.
- 2,254 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 (1326), Congo (103) and Togo (433).

Country examples:

- **Cabo Verde:** In a campaign to sensitise society on gender equality, focused on the prevention of GBV during confinement, the toll-free SMS 110 line, operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week, was created in partnership with the regulator and telecommunication operators to facilitate contact between GBV survivors/victims and CAV (victim support center) technicians. The Cape Verde Institute for Gender Equality and Equity (ICIEG) also set up an email service for GBV survivors to ask questions and request emotional support: violencia.covid@icieg.gov.cv. With the support of UNFPA and UNDP, ICIEG produced and published the spot "Bu ka sta bo so!" (you are not alone) during the emergency period in the prime time of public and private television. In addition, an international campaign was adapted to national context with the launch of "[Maskara 19](#)", supported by UNFPA and UNDP. The campaign aims to encourage women to seek help from a situation of violence and abuse, in a trusted pharmacy. Two survivors of GBV were placed in shelters and received psychosocial support, (and respective under-age children) after referral by the Attorney General's Office.
- **Cameroon:** In humanitarian settings in the South West Region, UNFPA included COVID-19 protection and prevention materials in dignity kits and RH kits. Kits were distributed in hard-to-reach areas such as Mundemba in the Dian division and in Eyumojock near Mamfe. In humanitarian settings in the South West Region, UNFPA provided economic recovery assistance called start-up kits to most-affected and ready-to-work persons with disabilities, who lost their already fragile source of income and livelihood because of COVID-19. The kits are made of goods that can be sold within the community. They are small scale investments for service delivery.
- **Gambia:** With support from UNFPA, the Network against GBV embarked on a four-day training on the clinical management of rape for twenty health care workers. The participants drawn from various health facilities in rural Gambia were trained to ensure that responses and delivery of emergency care to rape victims are adapted to various situations and hinged upon national laws and policies regarding sexual violence. As plans are under way to support and expand the services of one-stop centers, UNFPA engaged GBV partners in the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the one-stop centers and the GBV referral pathway. This process was multi-sectoral as it involved different stakeholders from government and CSOs.
- **Ghana:** UNFPA Ghana and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) organised a National Stakeholders' meeting to review the National Violence Policy and Plan of Action to implement the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732): "Stakeholders meeting to establish a functional Data and Information portal on child marriage." UNFPA organised a validation and capacity building workshop on the updated child marriage toolkit for field workers in Kumasi. UNFPA updated the toolkit in collaboration with the MoGCSP based on feedback from the field, emerging trends and best practices to ensure that the expected results are achieved. UNFPA Ghana organised a symposium of partners to accelerate efforts to achieve UNFPA's three transformative results. The UNFPA Representative, UNFPA Ghana Honorary Ambassador and the Ga Mantse, Dr. King Tackie Teiko Tsuru II, used the opportunity to highlight the need to protect the rights of women and girls, prevent SGBV and eliminate harmful practices, including child marriage; even more so in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Liberia:** 616 rape cases were reported at health facilities. Out of this number, 616 cases (100%) were treated with antibiotics, 76 cases were treated with post-exposure prophylaxis (<3 days), 34 were treated with Hepatitis B vaccine. UNFPA handed over a server and equipment for data management and deployment kits for mental health and psychosocial service providers to the Liberia Minister of Gender to enhance prevention care and support as they combat the increasing number of SGBV cases in Liberia.

2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence (continued)

- **Senegal:** 51 members of the Young Girls' clubs of Sibicaranto, Hamdalaye Diéga, Saré Faramba, Saré Moussa Ndour, Dabo in the Kolda region in southern Senegal have benefited from training in the artisanal manufacture of simple oil soap and antiseptics. Thanks to the four production units, acquired by the "Project for the Improvement of the Health and Well-being of Women and Adolescent Girls in Southern Senegal", they produced more than 300 pieces of local soap, based on natural products, which they started to market. The income generated will contribute to the empowerment of adolescent girls and to the fight against early marriage and pregnancy. A total of 90 young girls leaders were trained in dyeing, soap-making, batik and processing of fruits by the Adolescent Council center of Ziguinchor as part of the skills strengthening of young women leaders to carry in income-generating activities for their empowerment. 54 paralegals in Ziguinchor were trained on human rights, civil status, child marriage and GBV, an activity carried out within the framework of the project "Improving the health and well-being of women and adolescents in southern Senegal" by the Association of Jurists of Senegal (AJS), in partnership with UNFPA with funding from Canada.
- **Sierra Leone:** UNFPA Sierra Leone is continuing to support and equip the one-stop GBV centre in the King Harman Maternal and Child Health hospital in Freetown with the generous support of Irish Aid and the Government of China. UNFPA Sierra Leone continued to ensure the availability of free counselling and clinical services to GBV survivors through implementing partner Rainbo Initiative at centres in Bo and Freetown. In July, a total of 185 survivors were provided with free services. In August, a further 177 individuals received services.
- **Togo:** Within the framework of the Assistance Project for Survivors of Violence through the Digital Solution: Automated WhatsApps Chatbot, UNFPA Togo supported the Groupe de Réflexion Femme Démocratie et Développement with the capacity building of the managers of thirteen listening centers, paralegals, members of the community platform and other actors involved in the fight against GBV, to strengthen resilience of women and girls. At least 200 actors involved in the promotion and defense of women's rights were trained on sexual abuse and exploitation, GBV and crises.

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).
- A total of 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:

- **Cabo Verde:** During the period, 17,217 male condoms were distributed at the national level through a defined distribution circuit with the national health system, local associations and NGOs.
- **Gambia:** The community-based distribution approach was enhanced through the training of 50 new Community-Based Distributors and the provision of sanitary materials. This has helped in improving access to family planning services in 50 additional communities.
- **Ghana:** UNFPA Ghana and its partners organised a biannual National Quantification Workshop in September. This workshop was a platform to forecast and to generate Contraceptive Procurement Tables for the commodities supplies/contraceptive security programme. To commemorate the Family Planning week, a number of activities were implemented, including public sensitisation through various media channels, a Stakeholder's Launch, several family planning/SRH/SGBV outreaches, an E-Workshop on family planning-related International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) commitments and more.
- **Sierra Leone:** UNFPA distributed reproductive health supplies worth \$215,461 to 13 district medical stores and 24 hospitals in July and August. This included 10 family planning supplies and Oxytocin, a life-saving medicine. The contraceptive supplies distributed will protect more than 70,000 couples for a period of one year. In the month of August, two contraceptive implants (Jadelle) and Misoprostol were delivered to central medical stores. The implant sets will protect 248,000 couples for a period of one year.

Media & Communications

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 (RCCE), with UNICEF as lead and WHO as co-lead. The RCCE group runs a media campaign to raise awareness on COVID-19 response through a multilingual website. The website includes some local languages most spoken by people across the region..

Country examples:

- **Gambia:**

- [Leveraging the power of youth to strengthen community contact tracing and surveillance](#)
- [Supporting One-Stop Centers to strengthen The Gambia's GBV response mechanism](#) [Engaging adolescents through national conversations to address Gender-Based Violence in The Gambia](#)
- [Nurses and doctors trained on the Clinical Management of Rape](#)
- <https://gambia.unfpa.org/en/news/meet-bakary-sonko-representation-how-young-people-can-contribute-sustainable-peace>
- [Engaging political leaders through civic dialogue on peacebuilding and the draft Constitution](#)
- [Meet Bakary Sonko: A representation of how young people can contribute to sustainable peace](#)
- [Engaging adolescents through national conversations to address gender-based violence in the Gambia](#)
- [Supporting one-stop centers to strengthen the Gambia's GBV response mechanism](#)
- [Business continuity during business unusual: perspectives from UNFPA the Gambia staff](#)
- [Discussing youth engagement for National action: UNFPA supports International Youth day conversation](#)
- [Young people taking over the airwaves to discuss their issues and identify ways to contribute towards national development](#)

- **Ghana:**

- [Distinguished woman honored at the 2020 Glitz Africa Ghana Women of the Year honors](#)
- [What's next for women: using partnerships to achieve gender equality](#)
- [Ten years on; reviewing the national domestic violence policy](#)
- ["Involving traditional leaders in the fight against harmful practices is commendable"](#)
- [Saving lives despite the odds — spotlight on Agnes Aidoo](#)
- [60 minutes with Claudia Lumor, UNFPA Ghana Ambassador](#)
- [Government stakeholders and UNFPA celebrate International Youth Day 2020](#)
- [UNFPA Ghana supports Ghana Health Service with PPE](#)
- [Protect vulnerable women; their lives matter](#)
- [Using Wawa Aba to reduce teenage pregnancy in Bortianor](#)
- [DOVVSU investigators trained on SGBV case management](#)

- **Sierra Leone:**

- [Sharing life skills in the face of a pandemic: Sierra Leone's teens in action](#)
- [Improving quality obstetric care services to reduce maternal and newborn mortality in Sierra Leone](#)
- [Saving lives has never been more harrowing](#)
- [Youth leading the way in COVID-19 solutions](#)
- [International youth day — inspiration in action, Isatta's story](#)

- **Senegal:**

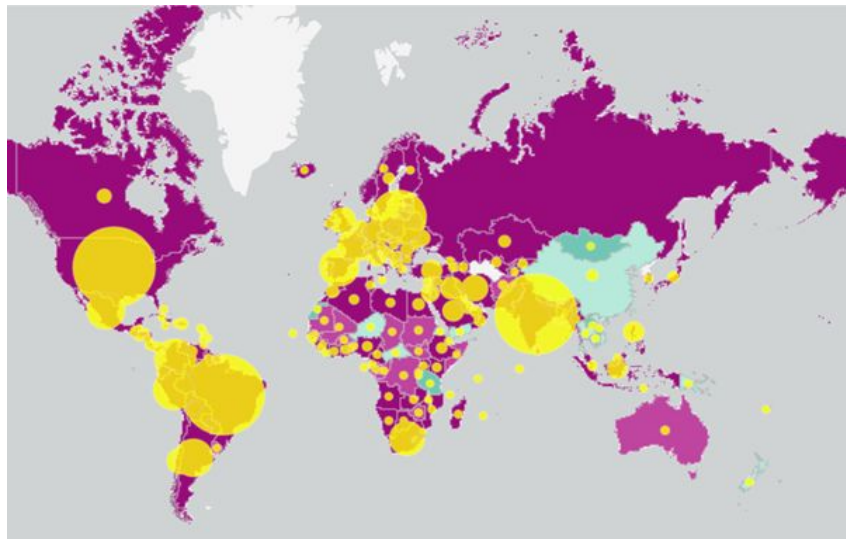
- [Fight against COVID-19: girls' clubs make soaps](#)
- [Launch of a distribution campaign of 25,000 masks](#)

- **Togo:**

- [Testimonials on the difficulties of community health workers during COVID-19](#)
- [Ensuring the continuity of maternity hospitals in times of COVID-19](#)

Confirmed Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 5 October 2020

Country	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Benin	2,357	41
Burkina Faso	2,154	59
Cabo Verde	6,360	65
Cameroon	20,875	418
Central African Republic	4,845	62
Chad	1,217	86
Congo	5,089	89
Côte d'Ivoire	19,849	120
Equatorial Guinea	5,045	83
Gabon	8,797	54
Gambia	3,594	115
Ghana	46,829	303
Guinea	10,754	66
Guinea-Bissau	2,362	39
Liberia	1,348	82
Mali	3,184	131
Mauritania	7,520	161
Niger	1,200	69
Nigeria	59,345	1,113
Sao Tome and Principe	913	15
Senegal	15,094	312
Sierra Leone	2,269	72
Togo	1,854	48
Total number of cases	232,854	3,603



See UNFPA's [COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard](#) for real-time updates