



# West and Central Africa Region

## COVID-19 Situation Report No. 1

United Nations Population Fund



Reporting Period: as of 17 April 2020

### Highlights

- While the virus came late to the region, all countries in the region now have confirmed cases. COVID-19 is spreading, and community transmission is increasing in some countries. A rapid acceleration of cases could quickly overwhelm vulnerable health systems.
- Swift action is urgently needed to control further spread of the virus and to improve the response capabilities of countries.
- UNFPA is working with the UN system, governments and partners, and is an active member of various regional coordination mechanisms: the COVID-19 Regional Response Platform, the UN Sustainable Development Group, the Inter-agency Steering Committee, and the Harmonization of Health in Africa.
- Discussions are underway to propose a holistic plan for integrated UN support to all countries in the region.
- The magnitude of the looming public health crisis and the alarming speed at which COVID-19 is spreading demands a united approach at all levels.
- With the region's recent Ebola outbreak, there is formidable knowledge, lessons learned and good practices that can collectively contribute to the structures in place to address the pandemic.
- The regional coordination platform will provide technical assistance while ensuring advocacy, political and resource mobilization and partnership to strengthen ongoing efforts as a One-UN response to the crisis and any emerging issues.
- UNFPA is engaging with regional institutions, such as the Economic Community of West African States, to build a problem-solving partnership in response to the crisis. The goal is to shift from a public health-centric focus to delivery of impact.
- UNFPA is striving to maintain life-saving sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response services during the outbreak.

### Situation in Numbers

 **5,282** Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

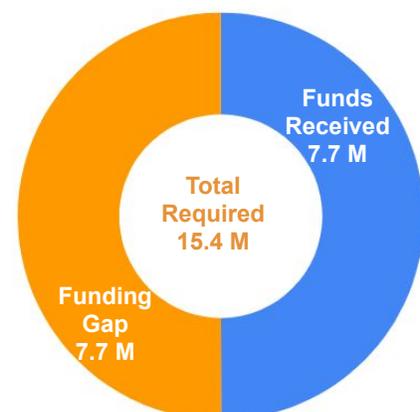
 **126** COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO April 17, 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\$)



## Regional Response Summary

The UNFPA response in the region aligns with the 2030 Agenda, the 2020 WHO Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Global Humanitarian Response Plan, and the [UNFPA COVID-19 Global Response Plan](#).

### Coordination

UNFPA is a member of country and regional structures including a COVID-19 Regional Response Platform, UN Country Team, UN Sustainable Development Group, Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC), and the Harmonization of Health in Africa. Discussions are underway to propose a holistic plan for integrated UN support to countries in the region.

UNFPA leads the UN Sustainable Development Group, working to bring stakeholders together for a coherent response to the pandemic. With the region's recent Ebola outbreak, there is knowledge, lessons learned and existing structures to leverage to address COVID-19.

The regional coordination platform for COVID-19 is facilitated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and comprises six sub-groups: (i) operational coordination, (ii) risk communication and community engagement, (iii) epidemiological surveillance, entry points and laboratory, (iv) case management and infection prevention and control, (v) rapid response teams and (vi) logistics and operational support.

### Continuity of SRH interventions, including protection of health workforce

UNFPA Country Offices have supported continuity of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) interventions by:

- Documenting and sharing good practices and lessons learned from previous health crises, including Ebola. This will contribute to the ongoing efforts of the UN system and other stakeholders, in areas such as surveillance, early detection, contact tracing and overall prevention.
- Advocating for the continuity of SRH services, considering that several countries were already in humanitarian situations before the pandemic;
- Providing technical support to national partners to adapt programmes to the current needs of the pandemic; and
- Coordinating with national and regional bodies, and playing a leadership role within the One-UN approach on the ground.

### Country examples:

- **Guinea Bissau:** UNFPA delivered critical medical supplies and sanitary items to the Operational Centre for Health Emergencies, intended for 11 health regions in Guinea Bissau.
- **Central Africa Republic:** UNFPA supported the government's fight against COVID-19 by donating 70 hand washing kits, 3,900 gloves, 6,900 masks, 4,489 tablets of soap to 48 health centres, 10 women's houses and 12 youth centres in Bangui, Bimbo and Negoua.

### Addressing GBV

UNFPA Offices have addressed GBV by:

- Working closely with WHO, the West African Health Organization (WAHO), the African Society for Infectious Diseases, OCHA and other UN partner agencies, international NGOs and national government authorities to provide technical advice on GBV and support planning efforts in response to COVID-19; and
- Engaging with countries to focus on high-profile interventions such as the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend initiative; Muskoka initiative on maternal, newborn and child health; and the Spotlight Initiative to address violence against women in the context of the COVID-19, and agree on key activities to be implemented immediately.

### Risk communication and community engagement

UNFPA is an active member in the Risk Communication and Community Engagement working group across all countries in the region. Led by UNICEF and WHO as co-lead, UNFPA is working collaboratively with other actors to engage various communities and stakeholders to raise awareness on COVID-19 preparedness and response.

Other organisations include: Action Contre La Faim (ACF), ActionAid, Alianza por la Solidaridad, ALIMA, Bioforce, CARE, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Heifer International (HI), INTERSOS, International Refugee Commission (IRC), Médecins du monde (Mdm), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Norwegian Refugee Commission (NRC), UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), International Organization of Migration (IOM), OOAS, OXFAM, Plan International, Save the Children, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, Water Aid, and World Vision.

UNFPA participates in planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of risk communication and community engagement activities in the context of a joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic in West and Central Africa.

In Senegal for example, UNFPA is supporting girls' clubs at community levels to install 247 washing points (commonly called "Tipi Tapa") to overcome the lack of potable and promote hand washing in their villages. And in Guinea Bissau, UNFPA is partnering with the Ubuntu Guinea-Bissau Academic, with over a 1000 youth network, to raise awareness against COVID-19



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4,000 dignity kits made available in Barsalogo and Djibo for women of childbearing age and vulnerable pregnant women. UNFPA Burkina Faso.

## Media & Communications

UNFPA West and Central Africa offices are actively engaged in media outreach to raise awareness, share guidance, and showcase achievements.

UNFPA's response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic are highlighted through many channels, including an interview with the Regional Director on Channels TV about: [How We Are Responding To Pandemic Fight - United Nations](#)

Through the Regional UN Sustainable Development Group in West and Central Africa, the Regional Director, as Acting Chairperson, has been advocating for a community-based approach to respond to COVID-19 pandemic. [Africa: Expediting a community-based response to COVID-19 pandemic in West and Central Africa](#)

In Guinea Bissau, UNFPA has partnered with the Ubuntu Guinea-Bissau Academic, a +1000-youth network to raise awareness to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### Burkina Faso

- [UNFPA dans la riposte face au COVID-19 au Burkina Faso](#)
- [Lutte contre le COVID-19 : les jeunes multiplient les initiatives de sensibilisation](#)

### Guinea Bissau

- [UNFPA and Ubuntu Guinea-Bissau Academy launch remote awareness campaign via telephone against COVID-19](#)
- [UNFPA supports Guinea-Bissau's response to COVID-19](#)

### Liberia

- [UNFPA Donates US\\$400K Assorted Medical Supplies and Equipment to Liberian Government](#)
- [Epi-surveillance and contact tracing key to breaking COVID-19 transmission in Liberia](#)

### Ghana

- [UNFPA Ghana responds to Relief Boxes Challenge launched by the First Lady of Ghana](#)

### Togo

- [eConvivial : Une Application sponsorisée par UNFPA Togo dans la lutte contre le COVID-19 au Togo](#)

### Senegal

- [Les jeunes filles installent des points de lavage dans les villages pour lutter contre le COVID 19](#)

### Nigeria

- [Implementing planned activities during COVID-19](#)
- [I am staying home for you. Are you doing the same? – Covid19 is real and the best prevention is to stay at home.](#)

### Sierra Leone

- [World Health Day: Protecting midwives to keep women and babies safe amid the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

### Central African Republic

- [UNFPA RCA dans la lutte contre le coronavirus en République Centrafricaine](#)
- WCARO communications tools for COVID-19:
  - COVID-19 pandemic web portal: <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/en/covid19-0>
  - One-stop data centre for COVID-19: <http://wca-unfpa-covid19.blogspot.com/>

## Annex: Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in WCARO (WHO, 17 April 2020)

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Benin	37	1
Burkina Faso	543	32
Cameroon	855	17
Cabo Verde	55	1
Central African Republic	12	0
Chad	27	0
Congo	117	5
Côte d'Ivoire	688	6
Equatorial Guinea	51	0
Gabon	95	1
Gambia	9	1
Ghana	641	8
Guinea	438	1
Guinea-Bissau	46	0
Liberia	73	6
Mali	171	13
Mauritania	7	1
Niger	609	15
Nigeria	373	11
São Tomé and Príncipe	4	0
Senegal	335	2
Sierra Leone	15	0
Togo	81	5
<b>Total WCARO</b>	<b>5,282</b>	<b>126</b>

Confirmed Cases by Country and Region

Region ● APRO ● ASRO ● EECARO ● ESARO ● LACRO ● WCARO

