

# Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery for Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific



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ICPD25  
International Conference on  
Population and Development





## Prepositioning life-saving supplies across Asia and the Pacific

The Regional Prepositioning Initiative, supported by the Australian Government, aims to ensure that the needs of women and girls in humanitarian crises are met by governments, UN agencies and key stakeholders. Prepositioning essential supplies to respond to sexual and reproductive health needs and gender-based violence backs a timely, effective and coordinated humanitarian response delivered through trained partners. The Initiative focuses on 11 priority countries. As of May 2019, supplies had reached almost 84,000 affected people in 28 emergencies across 10 countries.

📷 ↑ ©Munira Mutaher/UNFPA Sri Lanka

📷 → ©UNFPA Afghanistan



## Supporting access to sexual and reproductive health services in Afghanistan

After decades of instability and conflict, Afghanistan faces formidable development challenges. Wide-scale displacement significantly contributes to reproductive health challenges, including a very high maternal mortality rate. Over 6.3 million people need immediate and long-term humanitarian assistance. UNFPA is scaling up the response to Afghan returnees, internally displaced people and host communities in the cross-border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan to provide sexual and reproductive health services as well as prevention and response assistance to survivors of gender-based violence.

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## Strengthening services for displaced populations in Pakistan

Nearly 1.4 million Afghan refugees and 700,000 undocumented Afghan migrants currently live in Pakistan. Many are women. This presents complex challenges for humanitarian assistance. UNFPA is increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services in cross-border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, including for Afghan refugees, internally/temporarily displaced persons, returnees and host communities. The Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) has been incorporated in government-led plans, comprising crucial actions to meet reproductive health needs at the onset of every humanitarian crisis. UNFPA has also partnered with Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority to develop policy guidance on integrating gender-based violence interventions across humanitarian action.



## Reaching some of the most vulnerable in Bangladesh

Bangladesh hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations. Since August 2017, approximately 728,000 Rohingya refugees have sought refuge in Cox's Bazar after fleeing atrocities in Myanmar, joining hundreds of thousands of others who arrived in previous years. Over 1.2 million refugees and host community residents require humanitarian assistance. Women and girls are among those most in need.

UNFPA is providing life-saving services to Rohingya and host community populations by setting up clinics; deploying midwives in hard-to-reach areas; distributing hygiene, dignity and safety items; and providing women-friendly spaces that facilitate women's access to gender-based violence prevention and response services. From August 2017 to December 2018, over 594,000 women were screened by midwives and reproductive health workers. Over 135,000 women and girls accessed services from women-friendly spaces.



In just over 17 months, over **594,000** women were screened by midwives and reproductive health workers, and **135,000** women and girls accessed services from women-friendly spaces

## Integrating population data in disaster management in Indonesia

Part of the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, Indonesia has long been prone to disasters. As part of preparedness efforts, UNFPA has collaborated with the National Disaster Management Authority to develop accurate demographic and health data, a cornerstone of effective humanitarian response. After the 7.5 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that struck central Sulawesi in September 2018, UNFPA assisted the Government to effectively apply data resources to guide the humanitarian response and provided services to respond to sexual and reproductive health needs and gender-based violence.

## Building sustainable peace in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea, also situated in the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, is prone to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels, compounded by tribal conflicts. The conflict in the highlands has been intensified by the proliferation of weapons and the breakdown of traditional peacemaking structures. As part of assisting government-led development efforts, UNFPA, UN Women and IOM are jointly implementing a project to strengthen the role of women and youth as peace-builders to reduce conflict and improve the development in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.



## Leaving no one behind in Myanmar

Myanmar faces multiple overlapping humanitarian needs caused by natural disasters, intercommunal tensions and protracted armed conflict. Preparedness is a vital component of UNFPA's broader strategy to address needs across the humanitarian-development nexus. UNFPA prepositions dignity kits and reproductive health kits to ensure timely response to acute humanitarian needs. UNFPA also partners with local organisations and government and non-governmental counterparts to deliver integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and psychosocial services. Other efforts help strengthen national health and protection policies and systems to be more responsive and accountable to the hardest-to-reach populations.



## Enhancing coordination mechanisms for effective disaster response in Nepal

Nepal is a "disaster hotspot" at high risk from earthquakes, floods and landslides. UNFPA has been collaborating with stakeholders to strengthen coordination mechanisms and build capacities among service providers related to the MISP, gender-based violence and disaster assessment. UNFPA, through close engagement with relevant federal, provincial and local authorities, helps bolster humanitarian preparedness and response. New and updated disaster preparedness and response plans incorporate MISP components at all levels.

## Investing in young people on the frontlines in the Philippines

The Philippines is prone to natural disasters, particularly typhoons, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, compounded by long-running conflicts and instability. Youth engagement is crucial for disaster preparedness, emergency and peacebuilding efforts. As part of UNFPA programming, young volunteers take part in mobile community engagement teams that deliver sexual and reproductive health services and reach out to their peers.

In 2017, conflict in Marawi City displaced 353,000 people. Amid the crisis, displaced young people empowered over 5,000 other young people by teaching them how to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies, maintain healthy relationships and end gender-based violence.

📷 ↑ ©UNFPA Philippines

📷 ← ©UNFPA Myanmar

Preparedness is a vital component of UNFPA's broader strategy to address needs



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The supplies provided  
much needed relief  
for women, girls and  
people with disabilities  
displaced by the  
cyclone



## Prepositioning reproductive health kits in Fiji

A challenge facing the Pacific region and its island nations is the combined impact of complex weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña, and climate change. To address these risks, UNFPA works with Pacific island nations to enhance preparedness. Fiji is part of a Regional Prepositioning Initiative where UNFPA prepositions dignity kits and reproductive health kits in Suva. Following the devastation of back to back Tropical Cyclones Gita, Josie and Keni in February to April 2018, these strategically placed supplies were swiftly utilised to meet women's and girls' immediate reproductive health needs, saving lives as part of a multipronged humanitarian response.

## Ensuring safe birth in cyclone-struck Tonga

When Tropical Cyclone Gita struck Tonga in February 2018, it was the worst storm to hit in 60 years. UNFPA supported the Government's response and recovery plan, including the deployment of Fijian midwives through South-South cooperation to alleviate strains on the health workforce. Essential reproductive health and dignity kits were transported from a warehouse in Brisbane within 72 hours. The supplies provided much needed relief for women, girls and people with disabilities displaced by the cyclone and aided recovery measures by government hospitals and health centres.

## Providing timely assistance to flood-affected people in Lao People's Democratic Republic

Following the collapse of a hydropower dam in July 2018 in Attapeu province, UNFPA delivered prepositioned supplies from a Brisbane warehouse within 48 hours. Dignity kits were distributed to 2,700 women; 400 expecting mothers received clean delivery packs containing a bar of soap, clear plastic sheet, razor blade, umbilical cord tie, cloth and latex gloves to enable them to safely deliver their babies. Clean delivery kits were also distributed to 10 birth attendants to serve a population of 20,000 people over three months.

## Building resilience in Pacific island countries

In collaboration with 14 Pacific island nations, UNFPA launched KAILA! Pacific Voice for Action on Agenda 2030. It seeks to build climate change resilience by improving the health of women, children and adolescents, integrating key aspects of the global sustainable development agenda.

UNFPA is supporting a cadre of Fijian midwives who can be readily deployed to provide continuity of sexual and reproductive health services in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. The initiative has been widely recognised as a good demonstration of South-South cooperation within the Pacific region. Through the Regional Prepositioning Initiative, dignity kits and reproductive health kits prepositioned in a warehouse in Suva, Fiji have been quickly dispatched to several Pacific countries for disaster responses.



# In Asia and the Pacific



**154**

disasters strike per year on average

**690 million**

people have been affected by disasters in the past five years

**44%**

of all disasters worldwide occur in this region

At any time,

**4%**

of any displaced or disaster-affected population will be pregnant

**15%**

of those women will experience pregnancy-related complications

Women of reproductive age typically comprise

**a quarter**

of a crisis affected population

**60%** of all maternal deaths and **45%** of newborn deaths occur in fragile contexts

During emergencies, all women and girls are at heightened risk of being exposed to gender-based violence