

Ensuring supplies reach family planning and maternal health services in the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is placing countries at greater risk of shortages and stock-outs of essential reproductive health supplies. For the 46 UNFPA Supplies programme countries a quarterly reporting process ensures responsiveness and manages risks. Accurate planning earlier in the year has set the stage for efficient response in these challenging times.

For every country at risk of a stock-out, purchase orders have been placed and all orders are either under production, or about to be shipped or in transit. Steps taken to fill gaps in quarter 2 (Q2 – April to June 2020) included a partial shipment of subcutaneous injectable DMPA to avoid a shortfall in Sierra Leone, and the transfer of 250,000 surplus units from Nigeria to Zambia.

The COVID-19 impact can be seen in the reprogramming of some UNFPA Supplies resources. By mid-2020, 39 service-delivery related interventions had been delayed or modified in 19 countries (including training and community-based distribution for contraceptives) and 30 countries had re-programmed their annual workplan resources for various interventions. Of these 30 countries, 21 reprogrammed \$1,232,291 for the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) and \$50,000 for dignity kits containing hygiene supplies such as toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, sanitary pads and underclothes.



UNFPA Supplies is prioritizing supply requests, orders, shipments, production schedules and other operational aspects of procurement, in collaboration with governments and many valued partners.

The programme carries out a set of actions across all partner countries:

- Create and issue purchase orders for countries.
- Prioritize orders, fast-tracking or rescheduling according to the indicated risk of stock-out for each country.
- Ship partial or complete orders, depending on stock levels.
- Conduct quarterly and other assessments.
- Coordinate with partners to address additional needs with support from UNFPA Supplies or other funding resources.
- UNFPA supports the efforts of countries to obtain waivers when a given product is not registered by the National Regulatory Authority.
- UNFPA Country Offices advocate for prompt customs and port clearance to mitigate the risk of stock-outs.
- UNFPA Country Offices advocate for uninterrupted distribution of reproductive health commodities as essential medical supplies from port to last mile.

Quarterly assessments aim to avert stock-outs in 46 countries

This table presents results from the UNFPA Supplies Quarterly Commodity Review Process for Q2 through 30 June 2020. Purchase orders have been created and issued. Orders are being prioritized and scheduled in Q3/Q4 2020 as per indicated risk of stock-out for each country. Some orders have already shipped.

Contraceptives		
Product	Risk of stock-out in next 3 months	Risk of stock-out in 4 to 6 months
2-rod implant	11 countries	4 countries
1-rod implant	8 countries	9 countries
IUDs	4 countries	2 countries
Intramuscular injectable DMPA (DMPA-IM)	15 countries	13 countries
Subcutaneous injectable DMPA (DMPA-SC)	2 countries	2 countries
Intramuscular injectable NET-EN	3 countries	2 countries
Combined oral contraceptives (COCs)	7 countries	9 countries
Progestin-only pills (POPs)	6 countries	4 countries
Emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs)	8 countries	6 countries
Male condoms	7 countries	2 countries
Female condoms	5 countries	0 countries
Life-saving maternal health medicines		
Oxytocin	9 countries	3 countries
Misoprostol	13 countries	3 countries
Magnesium sulfate	11 countries	5 countries
Calcium gluconate	0 countries	4 countries
Combi-pack (Mifepristone +misoprostol tablets)	UNFPA Supplies is working closely with regional and country offices on introduction of the combi-pack in line with legal and regulatory frameworks and programmatic needs. Orders for two countries have been processed. Quantification exercises are planned in consultation with four countries in preparation for orders in the coming months.	

For partners with a direct operational need, these data are available on request, disaggregated, with country names, into projected stock-out risks for the periods of next 3 months and 4–6 months.

Note: (1) Not all contraceptive products are registered in all 46 countries, and in some countries for certain newer methods registration may be limited to only a single quality assured product, i.e. situations differ and generalizations do not apply; (2) Data reconciliation is ongoing with key stakeholders; (3) Some orders/shipments and delivery schedules are subject to issuance of waivers from national regulatory authorities in case a product is not registered in country; (4) Timely customs clearance at national level will be critical as soon as shipments arrive; (5) Where the analysis has indicated surplus stock in certain countries, feasibility of stock transfer is being explored; (6) Data completeness, consistency, accuracy, timeliness and validation with partners due to COVID-19 implication remains a challenge.

“Evidence indicates that the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 are being borne disproportionately by the most vulnerable populations. As we look to build a better future, UNFPA is committed to bringing down the barriers of inequality and poverty with life-saving sexual and reproductive health care, including family planning.”

Dr Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, UNFPA
UNFPA Supplies Annual Report 2019

RESOURCES

Brief issued on condoms and lubricants

“Condoms and lubricants in the time of COVID-19” provides country condom programme managers and experts with a summary of relevant actions to sustain supplies of male condoms, female condoms and lubricants, and to adjust approaches for condom promotion. The brief, issued by the Global HIV Prevention Coalition, UNFPA and UNAIDs, warned of the pandemic’s impact on condoms and other supplies: “The disruption of economic activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic will have far reaching implications for the provision, accessibility and security of supplies for sexual, reproductive, HIV and other health.” [View the brief](#)>

Filling gaps in the supply chain, a ride-hail app delivers contraceptives

Under Uganda’s COVID-19 lockdown, contraceptives and other reproductive health supplies have been in short supply. But now these items can be ordered through the popular ride-hailing app SafeBoda, and they will be delivered directly to the individual’s doorstep. [View the full story](#)>

Impact of COVID-19 on access to contraceptives in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

COVID-19 could critically undermine progress to end unmet need for family planning including by 2030 including in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region. A UNFPA-commissioned study found that access to contraceptives in the region could deteriorate as an immediate effect of service disruption as well as the indirect result of declines of personal and household income. The loss of close to 8 million contraceptive-years of protection (CYP) could potentially affect over 17 million women. [View the report](#)>

Lessons learned from epidemics

A review of responses to major epidemics was commissioned by the UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office with support from UNFPA Supplies and the French Muskoka Fund. The study looked at SARS-CoV, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Zika and MERS-CoV and found that responses to such outbreaks often have hurt maternal, reproductive and child health services. Recommendations are made regarding effective and fair responses. [View the report](#)>

For more information about the UNFPA response to COVID-19, visit the website www.unfpa.org/covid19 and view the latest regional situation reports:

[UNFPA Arab States](#)

[UNFPA Asia and Pacific](#)

[UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)

[UNFPA East and Southern Africa](#)

[UNFPA Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

[UNFPA West and Central Africa](#)

[Partner materials](#)

[FP2020 COVID data hub](#)

[MICRO modeling impact on contraceptive needs \(RHSC, Avenir + GFF\)](#)