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UN Women/Elena Ruiz Abril

Guidance Note

RAPID GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS OF COVID-19

A guide to integrate gender into socio-economic impact assessments of COVID-19

UN Women West and Central Africa Regional Office

As countries move to assess the impact that COVID 19 will have in West and Central Africa, it is important to recognize the different ways in which the crisis will impact men and women, and to identify the specific mechanisms by which the epidemic will impact women and girls, and particularly those already at risk.

This note will help UN Women Country Offices in West and Central Africa, Governments and Development Partners to identify key gender impacts of the crisis to be considered when conducting socio-economic impact assessments of COVID19, in order to develop policy and programmatic actions to mitigate those impacts and to set the foundations of a recovery effort which takes into account women and girls' needs.

WHAT



This note presents key elements of gender analysis to be introduced when conducting socio-economic impact assessments of COVID19 in countries in West and Central Africa. Out of all the potential gender impacts of the pandemic, the note focuses on those which are more relevant for countries of West and Central Africa.

HOW



The note follows the outline of a socio-economic assessment and identifies analysis to be undertaken in the different sections. It suggests time effective ways of conducting a rapid assessment using secondary sources and existing indicators. For in depth assessments which require of data collection, UN Women Regional Office is developing a rapid survey to assess the socio-economic impact of COVID19 on women and girls, the results of which can complement the analysis produced here as they become available.

WHAT FOR



Depending on the country, socio-economic impact assessments are being led by development partners, the Government or jointly by both. The information produced using this note can be integrated across the socio-economic assessment document and/or be presented as a stand-alone piece. UN Women Country Offices in the region can use the note to inform their discussions in the context of country joint assessments, prepare ToRs to support such analysis, conduct rapid analysis themselves, inform their own COVID planning, or to produce and advocacy brief to ensure that women and girls' needs are considered in the management of the crisis and the recovery effort.

Throughout the note use the text below (statements / paragraphs) supported with national data.

1. INTRODUCTION/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID19 will impact men and women in different ways because of their different socio-economic roles and existing gender inequalities. Overall social distancing measures and the economic slow-down as a result of the crisis is going to affect those in vulnerable employment the most. Groups of women at risk which are particularly vulnerable to the crisis in X country include informal and daily wage workers, domestic workers, migrant and refugee women and girls, victims of GBV, girls in food insecure households, old women and female health sector workers.

Leave no one behind: women and girls at risk in the COVID-19 crisis in West and Central Africa

- ▶ Women in the informal economy, daily wage workers, those on vulnerable employment (agricultural workers, market women, cross-border traders, domestic workers)
- ▶ Migrant and refugee women
- ▶ Women and girls who are victims of Gender Based Violence (domestic, harmful practices, victims of kidnapping, trafficking, etc.)
- ▶ Girls in low income and/or food insecure households
- ▶ Old women
- ▶ Female health sector workers

(by adding data to these bullet points you can turn this into a strong advocacy message)

2. HEALTH IMPACTS

The assessment will include one section on the health impact of the crisis. In that section, the following points should be made, supported with national data.

GENDER AND HEALTH IMPACTS. The crisis might threaten progress accumulated over the years in sexual and reproductive health outcomes in X country. As public health resources are redirected to the crisis response, and the health system is under increased stress as the crisis advances, key health services for women such as peri-natal and overall sexual and reproductive health services are likely to be affected. Progress made in X country fighting maternal mortality over the last decades could be threatened. In addition to this, pregnant women are within the risk groups of COVID, and at the same time need to access health facilities more often for regular check-ups, where the risk of infection is higher. *Add data on maternal mortality, % of births attended by professionals, adolescent pregnancy, and other indicators of sexual and reproductive health, and public expenditure in sexual and reproductive health (if available).*

FEMALE HEALTH SECTOR EMPLOYEES. Women globally are at the forefront of the COVID10 fight as they represent a large proportion of sanitary services and health personnel in hospitals, health centres, pharmacies, and cleaning crews of emergency services. They are therefore highly exposed to the epidemy, especially when there are shortages of protective equipment, and under tremendous physical and emotional stress. *(Add data on % of women among health personnel)*

OLDER WOMEN. Older persons are among the risk groups for the COVID19 Virus, and longer life expectancy makes women a higher proportion of this age group in X country. *(Add national data on % of women over 65 compared to men if available)*. Old women are more likely than men to be illiterate *(national data if available)* and therefore might have more difficulties accessing information about preventive measures, aggravating their exposure to COVID risk.

3. ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The assessment will include one section on economic analysis, most likely by sector. In that section, the following points should be made, supported with national data.

WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND THOSE IN VULNERABLE EMPLOYMENT. Social distancing measures are likely to affect female informal workers, and daily wage workers the most. Some will lose their jobs or see their income significantly reduced (e.g. domestic workers) and others will see mobility restrictions, closure of borders or closure of urban markets and/or the hospitality industry reduce significantly their income and livelihoods. *Add national data on % of women working informally, % of women working in agriculture, % of market women, % of women in cross-border trade, % of women domestic workers.*

WOMEN-LED MSMES AND WOMEN IN WAGED EMPLOYMENT.

Women led MSMEs will be severely impacted by the crisis. MSMEs represent a large part of women-led businesses in X country *(data on % of women led businesses national, and % of women-led businesses which are small)*, and are concentrated in low productivity sectors *(add data on % of women businesses in agriculture and services)*. These businesses are fragile, have problems to access finance in normal conditions, and have little margin to cushion economic shocks. Disruptions in supply chains and closure of markets will have an immediate impact on them as they do not have financial resources to maintain operations beyond a few weeks or days in some cases. Special attention should be paid and measures to strengthen their resilience considered (see response section).

For **Female wage workers**, in addition of potential unemployment, or reduction of income, the crisis is likely to impact women through an increase in number of hours they spend in unpaid care work as a result of school closures. *Add data on % of women in wage employment or working for the public sector.*

4. OTHER SOCIAL IMPACTS

The assessment might not include a section on other social impacts. If it doesn't, it is important to add it and include the following messages, when possible, supporting statements with national data.

INCREASE IN THE BURDEN OF UNPAID WORK. Households' care burden is going to increase as a result of the crisis as schools close, and mobility restrictions limit availability of domestic work and other household support services. Women do 3 times more work than men globally (*add national data if available*) and this pattern is expected to reproduce itself during the crisis. Therefore, it is likely that women will be shouldering the heavy burden of unpaid care work during this period, adding further strain to physical and mental health.

INCREASE IN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.

Incidence of GBV is increasing rapidly as a result of COVID19 globally. The crisis is contributing to this in several ways. First, social distancing measures, and in particular confinement, are aggravating the situation of victims of domestic violence who see themselves locked down with their aggressors in conditions of heightened stress. Confinement also increases the use of internet, particularly by young people, and might increase girls' exposure to cyber crime, including gender-based violence. Second, the erosion of household livelihoods in the short term, may lead to an increase in harmful practices against women and girls (e.g. early marriages), trafficking, or may push women into coping strategies involving transactional sex. *Add any national indicator of prevalence of different GBV forms (early marriage, FGM, intimate partner, sexual assault, etc.)*

The crisis is also affecting GBV support services. Access to reporting and immediate support services is also more difficult as a result of mobility restrictions, and essential services, including life-saving care such as clinical management of rape, mental health, psycho-social support, may be disrupted when health and social services providers are overburdened and focused on the management of COVID-19. The economic slow-down associated with the COVID crisis is also likely to affect other GBV support services such as access to justice and economic reintegration in the medium term. *(short description of key support services-hotlines, shelters, public or CSO-led psychosocial support, etc. and how they are likely to be affected by social distancing measures)*

GIRLS IN LOW-INCOME AND/OR FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS. Girls will be directly impacted by the crisis in a number of ways including interrupting their education as a result of school closure, heightened risk of different forms of GBV (see previous section in this note). For many girls in low income households, school closure will also mean losing access to school feeding programs, with the subsequent impact on their food security and on nutrition outcomes. Add data on gender gap in primary education, and number of children in school feeding programmes.

CONFLICT AND COVID-19. In regions of X country already affected by conflict and instability, or countries largely affected by conflict, the impact of the crisis on women will take a particularly dangerous dimension, given heightened vulnerability to many of the potential impacts identified above, and critical disruption of social and community systems necessary to articulate the response to the compounded crisis. *The socio-economic assessment should include a section with a specific COVID response in those regions where the impacts identified in this note are analyzed through conflict lenses and specific mitigating actions are proposed.*

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN. Female migrants, refugees and IDPs usually have less access to basic services and find themselves already in a vulnerable position as a result of conflict and/or displacement. They might not have the same legal rights as nationals and this can curtail their access to certain aspects of the response (e.g. health system). It will be important to identify this as one of the most vulnerable groups of all of those impacted by the COVID19 crisis in the immediate term. *Add reference to number of migrants, IDPs and/or refugees, mention whether they are in camps or integrated in cities.*

5. TOWARDS A GENDER RESPONSIVE COVID19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

MITIGATING AND BUILDING BACK BETTER. The specific gender related elements of the COVID response will vary from country to country depending on the extent and importance of the impacts identified in the previous sections. This section of the assessment should provide recommendations to mitigate the gender impacts of the response as well as to ensure that women and girls are not left behind of the recovery effort. This requires a combination of short-term measures (to mitigate immediate effect of the crisis) and medium and longer term measures that will support women's empowerment throughout recovery.

For short term **mitigating measures**, the list below provides examples of actions to address the gender impacts identified above. However, the list is non-exhaustive and countries are encouraged to propose other actions adapted to the local situation.

For medium and long term **recovery measures**, the priority is to assess the country's recovery package and critically analyze whether it is targeting the sectors of the economy which are critical to women, whether measures are in place to ensure that women-led businesses will benefit from the economic measures, and, most important, whether recovery can be used as an opportunity to 'build back better' by strengthening post-crisis socio-economic resilience while addressing structural gender inequalities in different areas of the economy and society.

GENDER MITIGATION MEASURES



Women in the Economy

Design application of social distancing measures for markets and other critical economic infrastructure in a gender responsive way

Expansion of existing unconditional cash transfers schemes to reach those in informal and vulnerable employment

Establishment of Public Works Programmes for women-led production, including of key goods to fight COVID (masks, hydroalcoholic gel, other)

Sourcing from women-led businesses and cooperatives for in-kind transfers of food and basic equipment

Support women-led SMEs entry in key sectors of the crisis economy (e.g. food production, health and hygiene products, protective equipment, etc.) through technical assistance, soft loans, tax breaks and gender responsive procurement practices both from private as well as the public sector

Introduction of paid leave and flexible work formulas for workers (men and women) to adapt their schedules to the increase in care burden (as a result of school closure)

Gender Based Violence

If services for the protection of GBV victims existed before the crisis, it is important that they remain operational during the crisis and they are considered one of the emergency sectors not to be shut down if economic lockdown measures are being considered.

If possible, they should be scaled up through additional resource allocation as part of crisis interventions to public or CSO-led GBV services (including shelters) to respond to the increase in GBV rates.

Easy to report mechanisms in the context of confinement should be established such as reporting in supermarkets, pharmacies and other community services in operation despite social distancing measures.

Special awareness should be raised among police and other to not fine/restrict mobility of women and girls who are in the process of reporting GBV.

Continue measuring the incidence of GBV during the crisis, including through rapid measurement mechanisms (e.g. reports via hotlines, other emergency report mechanisms)

Prioritize GBV survivors among recipients of cash transfers and other social protection mechanisms as well as other livelihood and economic restoration strategies

Shield public expenditure on sexual and reproductive health and GBV services

GENDER MITIGATION MEASURES



Unpaid care

Introduction of a cash-for-care transfer for households channeled through women

Introduction of flexible schedules and paid leave for workers to accommodate care needs

Introduction of awareness raising messages about redistribution of care as a civic element in the crisis effort, and disseminate widely in broader advocacy and communications campaigns as part of the crisis response

Data collection

Across the impacts identified in this note, it is important to continue collecting sex disaggregated data during the response so we can improve programmes as we go and learn from this crisis for the future.

It will be essential to identify key ongoing data collection exercises in the country, including rapid surveys, and work with teams to ensure that sex-disaggregated data are collected in all aspects of the response and in particular on the economic impact, including for informal workers, incidence of GBV, and on unpaid care.



GENDER IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID



At-a-glance one-page summary

1. Introduction

Summary statement about differentiated gender impact identifying key groups of women at risk: (i) women in the informal economy, daily wage workers, and those on vulnerable employment including agricultural workers, market women, cross-border traders, domestic workers, etc.; (ii) migrant and refugee women; (iii) GBV victims; (iv) girls in low income households; (iv) old women; and (v) female health sector workers.

2. Economic Impacts

- Women in informal and vulnerable employment (particular focus on agriculture, market women and cross-border traders, and domestic workers)
- Women-led SMEs

3. Social impacts

- Unpaid care burden
- Increase in GBV rates
- Migrant and refugee women
- Old Women
- Girls in low income households

4. Response

Short term mitigation measures

- Expand unconditional cash transfers to those in **informal and vulnerable employment**, establish public Works Programmes for women-led production of COVID-19 protective equipment, source from women businesses and cooperatives for in-kind transfers of food and basic equipment
- Support **women-led SMEs** entry in key emergency economy sectors through soft loans, tax incentives and gender responsive procurement practices
- Maintain and expand **GBV** related services, implement easy-to-report mechanisms for victims in the context of social distancing measures, and continue measuring the incidence of GBV during the crisis
- Advocate for **unpaid care** redistribution in social media and other COVID prevention campaigns, and provide flexible working mechanisms and paid leave to workers to accommodate care needs.
- Shield public expenditure in critical sectors such as GBV and sexual and reproductive **health**
- Identify key ongoing **data** collection exercises in the country, including rapid surveys, and work with teams to ensure that sex-disaggregated data are collected in all aspects of the response and in particular on the economic impact, incidence of GBV, and repercussions on unpaid care.

Medium term recovery measures – analysis of national economic recovery packages to ensure that:

- They target economic revitalization in sectors of the economy which are critical to women;
- They include measures to support recovery in the informal sector;
- They are designed in a way in which women-led businesses can benefit from the economic measures;
- Recovery is used to 'build back better' by strengthening post-crisis socio-economic resilience while addressing structural gender inequalities in different areas of the economy (e.g. unpaid care) and society.