

## **Remarks of UNFPA Executive Director (3 min)**

### **Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP Friday 29 May 2020 | 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Mr. Chair,  
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,  
Excellencies, colleagues, and friends,

COVID-19 is striking those already vulnerable and marginalized the hardest, testing our commitment to leave no one behind. UNFPA estimates that the pandemic could result in millions more cases of gender-based violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and unintended pregnancies.

Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights is not just something nice to have; it's life-saving. It's fundamental to our humanitarian, health, and socioeconomic responses. The UNFPA global response fully aligns with the three UN pillars, framed by Agenda 2030. Our response is premised upon using this crisis, with sharpening focus upon strengthening health systems, to build back better.

The reformed, empowered system helped UNFPA and partners spring into action, to compile guidance from our country teams driven by realities on the ground and evidence. This guidance is working, informing action within and beyond the UN system.

Together with WHO, UNFPA co-led drafting of the health pillar of the UN socio-economic response framework. We're working collaboratively with our partners and the Secretary-General's office to report the impact of COVID-19 on issues of gender, human rights, people on the move, children, older persons and other areas.

Under the leadership of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, UN country teams are re-purposing activities to respond quickly to requests for assistance related to the coronavirus.

In the Asia-Pacific region, UNFPA is engaged in rapid socio-economic impact assessments, working jointly with partners to ensure that surveillance and response systems include disaggregated health data — to identify and reach those most at risk.

In Zambia, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO jointly mobilized resources to strengthen health system resilience to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. UNFPA continues to coordinate joint action on prevention and treatment of gender-based violence in humanitarian settings all around the world.

UNFPA has long been steadfast in our commitment to work together to uphold SRHR. This is paying off now because no one agency can respond to this pandemic alone. We count on the support of all member states as we stand up, in solidarity with our partners, for ACTION in this Decade of Action, to protect the dignity and health of women and girls, and young people when they need us most.

Thank you.