

WOMEN DELIVER

WHA73: Women Deliver calls for gender lens on all COVID-19 response and recovery

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the most effective policy responses will be those that account for how the crisis is experienced by girls and women.

New York, NY, 18 May 2020 — Today, Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) will come together for the 73rd World Health Assembly* to advance COVID-19 response and recovery. As delegates consider courses for action in response to the COVID-19 crisis, Women Deliver, a global advocate for gender equality and girls' and women's health and rights, stresses the need to apply a gender lens to all investments, policies, and programs, so the unique needs of girls and women are addressed, their skills and expertise are leveraged, and health for all is secured.

“When pandemics strike, world leaders and health responders must adapt quickly to the threat. Often the last factor they consider is gender,” said Susan Papp, Managing Director of Policy & Advocacy, Women Deliver. “All policies, programs, and investments, including stimulus and recovery packages, must be designed with a gender lens, so they don't overlook or have unintended consequences for girls, women, and gender equality.”

In a written statement posted to the World Health Organization, Women Deliver recommends the following actions:

1. Mainstream gender in all policies, programs, and investments — leveraging gender-responsive analysis, budgeting, and auditing for tracking and accountability.
2. Collect and utilize sex- and age-disaggregated data so policies and investments leave no one behind. Data must include those who are often excluded, such as refugees, internally displaced people, people with disabilities, and people with non-binary gender identities.
3. Guarantee protection, support, and fair compensation to those on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response — the majority of whom are women.
4. Safeguard maternal, sexual, and reproductive health as core, essential health services. Funding and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, including safe childbirth, modern contraception, and safe abortion, must be prioritized and recognized as essential, lifesaving services and commodities. Prioritizing Primary Health Care and Universal Health Coverage, grounded in gender equality and human rights, must also be part of recovery to foster strong, resilient health systems for the future.

Finally, Women Deliver calls for meaningful engagement of girls and women — in all their rich diversity — in COVID-19 decision making. They are experts in their lives and the communities where they live and work and will help shape better, more sustainable outcomes.

As COVID-19 continues to reshape our world, it is clear that to deliver health, well-being, and dignity for all, we need to apply a strong gender lens on response and recovery. Putting girls and women front and center will deliver lifesaving services for all and help build back better for the future.



Learn more about Women Deliver's work on response to COVID-19:

- [10 Recommendations for Applying a Gender Lens to COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#)
- [Open Letter Calling on Governments to Apply a Gender Lens to COVID-19 Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#)
- [A Gender Lens for COVID-19](#)
- [To end COVID-19, refugee girls and women must be part of the solution](#)

* Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the 73rd World Health Assembly will take place in a virtual format over two days, starting on Monday 18 May and concluding no later than Tuesday 19 May.

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About Women Deliver: Women Deliver is a leading global advocate that champions gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women. Our advocacy drives investment – political and financial – in the lives of girls and women worldwide. We harness evidence and unite diverse voices to spark commitment to gender equality. And we get results. Anchored in sexual and reproductive health, we advocate for the rights of girls and women across every aspect of their lives. We know that investing in girls and women will deliver progress for all.