



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

The gendered impact of COVID-19: Towards better diplomatic responses

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Moderated by [Dr Katharina Höne](#) senior researcher and lecturer at DiploFoundation.

[Ms. Susan Harris Rimmer](#) –Griffith Law University, Deputy Director of the Law Futures Centre:

Diplomacy is often seen as a neutral activity. But diplomacy have always been a **stage for social class** advantages. **85% of the world ambassadors are still men** and the language of diplomacy and the practice of foreign policy are **male dominated**. This is why we do need **feminist foreign policy**.

The way we respond to violence is a political choice. If we responded to **gender-based violence** as we **responded to terrorism**, we would have different results.

When there is a crisis, we have to be more radical and faster to react. **Gender-based violence was the most predictable result of the lockdowns**. Yet, almost every country in the world failed to see this. This is a clear example of the **lack of clear vision regarding gender equality**.

We should **build back fairer instead of build back better**. We also have to focus our future efforts on **climate change**, it will be the main challenge in the future.

[Ms. Monica Ferro](#) – Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in Geneva:

Inequalities have been highlighted and exacerbated during the COVID19 pandemic. Gender is both a building block and a goal. When the pandemic hit, we became aware of the impact it would have on women and girls. We issued a **guidance in March** to protect women and girls during the pandemic.

We hear everyday that the **pandemic does not discriminate**, but we also hear that **women disproportionately suffer from COVID19**. All over the world, women continue to get **pregnant**, to have babies and to suffer from **gender-based violence**, while the attention is focused on the COVID response.

The UNFPA released projections in the framework of the pandemic: if the COVID spread, 47 million women will not be able to access to **contraceptive means**, which would lead to **7 million undesired pregnancy**. Disruption of programs to fight **Feminine Genital Mutilations** could lead to **2 million new cases of FGM** in the next decade, we may also see **13 million child marriage** that could have been prevented. What this crisis can do for gender equality is to make governments understand how **data** can help advance gender equality and how **Civil Society Organizations** are reliable partners to achieve it.

[Mohammad Naciri](#) – Regional Director of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific:

Patriarchy is still very much alive in Asia-Pacific region. Both in religious and political spheres. Men come first and women as well as the full spectrum of gender diversity comes next. **Women and all genders have less access to opportunities and services**.

We are leading a coalition with other UN agencies in Asia-Pacific, trying to work on the ground, to respond to the current needs. We are embarking on a rapid assessment from a gender and human rights lens of the different national responses to COVID19. We launched a **telephone survey that reached 27 million people** across the region to assess the impacts on women, girls, and all genders.

The pandemic exposed how **COVID was another instigator of conflict at the local level**, with religious and ethnic minorities. In all that we continue to see that the **number of women leaders in each country remains low**.