

**Prioritizing Women and Girls in Humanitarian Crises: A look back at the 2019 Maluku Humanitarian Response**

On September 26, 2019, a large-scale earthquake with a substantial magnitude of 6.5 struck Ambon, Maluku Province, with over 2,500 houses were damaged and 130,000 people were displaced, according to the National Agency for Disaster Management (BNPB).



Houses collapsed due to impact of the earthquake.

Ambon city, Central Maluku district, and West Seram district were among the most severely affected. A state of emergency was in effect at the provincial level.



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During humanitarian crises, women and children face grave risks such as increased rates of gender-based violence (GBV), unintended pregnancy, maternal morbidity and mortality, and in extreme cases, forced marriage. Therefore, the needs of women and girls should be prioritized and placed at the center of emergency response.



Many pregnant mothers were at risk of life-threatening complications and lost access to contraceptive services, and even became more vulnerable to violence.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was on the ground, under the coordination of The Ministry of Health as the Reproductive Health Sub Cluster Coordinator, to continue sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and ensure the safety and dignity of women and girls.

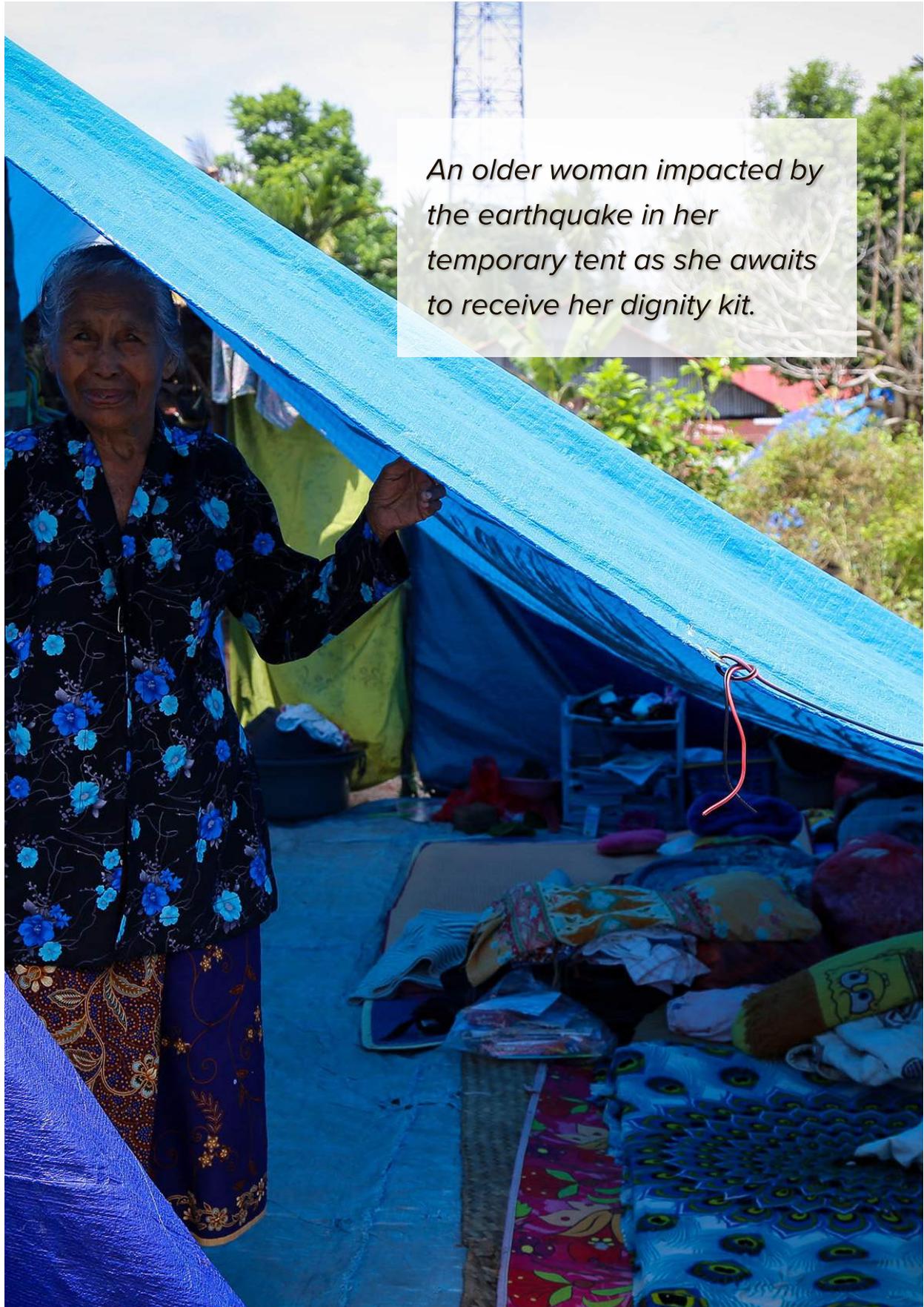


Dignity kits are delivered to affected women carefully yet swiftly.

Through funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and with support from UNFPA, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection distributed hygiene kits, maternity kits, post-delivery kits, and new-born kits, as well as established and administered three reproductive health (RH) tents to provide core lifesaving SRH services vital for the health and dignity of women and girls.

During the response, the RH and GBV Sub-Clusters were activated to facilitate and coordinate the response effort in the implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for

Reproductive Health, and distribute aid such as prepositioned individual kits to the affected to ensure their health and hygiene during the emergency situation.



*An older woman impacted by the earthquake in her temporary tent as she awaits to receive her dignity kit.*

In disaster situations, physical conditions and long-distance health facilities could become barriers in accessing basic needs for older persons and persons with disabilities. Therefore, humanitarian responders should monitor their conditions closely and provide tailored assistance to each individual.

Based on such needs on the ground, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health also distributed elderly kits in addition to the distribution of kits for women of reproductive age to meet their health and hygiene needs.



<https://youtu.be/iyHtmgOKQys>

According to dr. Rosdiana Perau, Head of the Public Health Division of the Maluku Provincial Health Office, the prepositioned dignity kits are critical to women and girls since finding essential hygiene items such as towels, sheets, sanitary pads, and underwear is challenging during times of disaster. It is also difficult for them to raise the

concern of community leaders and humanitarian workers, as they are often men.



dr. Rosdiana Perau, Head of Maluku Province Public Health Sector conducting maternal health counseling to the displaced.

"With these kits, mothers, adolescent girls, and newborns can take full use of these items and

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