



BIANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



UNFPA Thailand



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FOREWORD



UNFPA



For a sustainable future,
**let us make rights and
choices a reality for all**

by Najib Assifi, Country Director a.i. for UNFPA Thailand

The year 2019 marked 25 years since Thailand and another 178 countries adopted the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Even before the adoption of the Programme of Action, Thailand had taken measures to ensure that the whole population, especially women and girls, had rights and choices, including in relation to reproductive health. Since the 1960s, Thailand has been a global model for expanding support for family planning and providing access to modern contraception. In 2002, the country took a bold step by adopting universal health coverage before it had achieved upper-middle-income country status (which was granted in 2011). This demonstrates Thailand's commitment to making the well-being of individuals a top priority. As a result of this support for health care, Thailand has the second lowest maternal mortality ratio among countries in the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

However, some gaps in achieving the unmet need for family planning remain among some population groups, which have resulted in increasing numbers of adolescent pregnancies. Given the effect of early pregnancy on the adolescent population, Thailand enacted the Act for the

Prevention and Solution of Adolescent Pregnancy in 2016 as a legal measure to ensure concerted efforts from all relevant ministries to provide adolescents with rights and choices in relation to their reproductive health. As a trusted partner, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) worked alongside the Royal Thai Government before, during and after the enactment of the law, particularly in relation to ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and collecting evidence on how to meet adolescents' needs and demands with regard to their reproductive health.

Thailand faces a number of challenges as a result of its ageing population and low birth rate, and the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in which vulnerable population groups—older persons, youth with disability and teen mothers—are more affected. Thailand could turn these challenges into opportunities for demographic dividend through a commitment to taking tangible action in response to this changing population structure. There is a need to empower every group of the population, but particularly young people, to gain the right skills to enable them to make informed decisions to achieve their potential. UNFPA stands ready to work with the public and private sectors, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia and young people themselves to achieve the society that Thai people want, that is,

'An empowered population, a sustainable future for all, leaving no one behind'.

UNFPA: Ensuring rights and choices for all

The commitment of UNFPA to ensuring rights and choices for all is reflected in the 11th programme cycle (2017–2021) through outputs that focus on youth empowerment in an ageing population and data-driven advocacy for evidence-based population and development policy. In 2018, UNFPA committed to achieving three zeros by 2030: zero unmet need for contraception; zero preventable maternal deaths; and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage. Our work and our targets support the UNFPA vision to see a world where all young persons, especially adolescent girls, are entitled to sexual and reproductive health rights and are able to make informed choices. This will enable young persons to develop and fulfil their potential.





Ensuring rights and choices for every young person (output 1)

Thailand has achieved a great deal of success through its family planning initiatives that were introduced in the 1970s, including making modern contraceptives highly accessible for the reproductive-aged population. Up to 79 per cent of married couples use modern contraceptives. However, a number of adolescent girls aged 15–19 years do not have access to modern contraceptives. This has led to high rates of adolescent pregnancy: 53.4 per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years in 2011. Although the rate decreased to 35 per 1,000 women in 2018, it is still high for an upper-middle-income country where resources and access to contraception are available. UNFPA contributed to the enactment of the Act of the Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy in 2016. The cornerstone of the Act is to ensure that young persons, including those with disabilities, are entitled to and enjoy rights to sexual and reproductive health as stipulated under the Act and as outlined in the ICPD. UNFPA works alongside partners to encourage young persons, including

Promoting the voices of young persons in policymaking (output 2)

Promoting the voices of young persons through meaningful participation is key to the work of UNFPA. UNFPA supports young persons to develop the skills, knowledge and support needed to make informed decisions about their bodies, lives, families, communities, countries and the world.

UNFPA engages young people in its work and advocates for youth engagement in the policies affecting young people's lives. To empower young advocates to campaign for policies and measures that will improve their lives, UNFPA works alongside young people to develop evidence-based recommendations on issues advocated for with policymakers. Just as importantly, UNFPA provides financial and technical support to adolescents and youth who are in the process of building networks and organisations to advocate for their human rights. The inclusion of youth from diverse backgrounds and identities, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised groups, is

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