



Policy Paper:

Using **International Human Rights
Norms and Standards to**
**Strengthen Viet Nam's
Legal Framework on
Population**



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ABBREVIATION

CAT	Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
GNP	Gross National Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
RTI	Reproductive Tract Infections
RH	Reproductive Health
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

FOREWORD

Population trends and dynamics play a powerful role in development, and must therefore be factored into planning and policy decisions. Because population dynamics vary widely – from countries trying to provide opportunities for enormous youth populations to those coping with low fertility and ageing – policies dealing with population issues must be tailored to their specific needs. Above all, it is critical that these policies be grounded in a fundamental respect for human rights.

Human rights are essential for all people. These rights must be protected, respected and fulfilled for everyone regardless of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, and their other status or identity. Human rights also include women's rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights as affirmed internationally in the Vienna Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. In fact, sexual and reproductive health and rights are part of a continuum of human rights, which includes the rights to life, health and education, the rights to equality and non-discrimination, and the right to decide the timing, number and spacing of one's children.

Viet Nam is in an advanced stage of its demographic transition which is attributable to efforts by the Government of Viet Nam in investing in family planning and improving key social development indicators. However, there is disparity and inequality among regions and population groups. In addition, Viet Nam is now getting prepared for sustaining the achievements and addressing emerging population issues, including demographic bonus, rapid population ageing, sex-ratio at birth imbalance, migration, and urbanization, which require changes in policy response. Major shift from a population control approach to a broader perspective on population and development in Viet Nam's population policies is essential in this new demographic context. Furthermore, commitments to mainstream population dynamics, reproductive health and gender issues into national policies and strategies, explicitly adopting a human rights, culture and gender perspective and a life-cycle approach need to be ensured.

This report emphasizes how human rights norms and principles can be used in every stage of policy development and implementation toward strengthening the Viet Nam's population law and related policies in its new demographic context to ensure continued and sustainable success. The key message of this report is that developing a robust legal framework that integrates population policy goals, international human rights norms, and effective development policy is a potential area of leadership for Viet Nam. Viet Nam's development of human rights-based population law, related policies and programmes will help the country address the range of its demographic concerns, improving the lives of all people.

We hope this policy paper to function as a guide for policy makers and key stakeholders to place and ensure human rights ratified at the ICDP and other international treaties even more effectively in the forefront of decision-making processes with respect to law and policies regarding population and development in Viet Nam, thus ultimately support the well-being of all population, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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