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Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

**UNFPA's responses to the needs
of Safe Motherhood and Newborn Care in Viet Nam**



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Motherhood and Newborn Care in Viet Nam

"No nation can be developed when women are denied the right to health, and no nation can progress when large numbers of women die while giving life".

Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, during her keynote address to the
60th World Health Assembly, Geneva, 15th May 2007

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
CP6	Sixth Joint Programme of Cooperation (2001-2005)
CP7	Seventh Joint Programme of Cooperation (2006-2010)
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSO	General Statistics Office
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HMIS	Health Management Information System
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDTs	International Development Targets
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NSGs	National Standards and Guidelines for Reproductive Health Care Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PATH	Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health
PCPFCs	Provincial Committees for Population, Family and Children
RHC	Reproductive Health Care
SMI	Safe Motherhood Initiative
TT	Tetanus toxoid
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VCPFC	Viet Nam Committee for Population, Family and Children
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Preface

In December 2005, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) completed the Sixth Joint Programme of Cooperation (CP6). To mark the end of 5 years of collaboration (2001-2005), UNFPA undertook a series of studies to draw lessons learned and best practices from the programme's implementation.

This report is prepared by Ms Barbara Bale, a reproductive health expert and specialist in maternal and newborn health, who has long experience of the health care system of Viet Nam. It documents the progress made in improving the health of women and their babies and UNFPA's role in the successes to date. It also points towards the direction needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that directly and indirectly impact on maternal and child health. This report is the outcome of a review of secondary sources of information including reports produced by the Government of Viet Nam, particularly the Ministry of Health, and UNFPA project reports. Other sources of information, much of which is available from web sites in the public domain, have been referenced in the text or as footnotes.

The Millennium Development Goals form a blueprint agreed to by all countries and the world's leading development institutions at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to make unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest by 2015. This document identifies valuable lessons for the planning and application of future maternal and newborn health programmes by government, NGOs, United Nations agencies and other concerned stakeholders to ensure the achievement of the MDGs in Viet Nam.

I would like to thank Ms Barbara Bale for her considerable efforts in completing this report. I would also like to thank Dr Duong Van Dat of UNFPA Viet Nam for his coordination in preparing and publishing lessons learned and best practices from UNFPA's country programmes. Lastly but most importantly, we would like to acknowledge the reproductive health policy makers and service providers, and their clients who are the essence of the UNFPA assistance programme and for whom this publication is intended to benefit. It is UNFPA's wish that the lessons learned and experiences gained from CP6 will be of use to policy makers, programme managers, health professionals and donors in designing and implementing reproductive health programmes aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Viet Nam.

Ian Howie
Representative
UNFPA in Viet Nam

Background and context

What are the Millennium Development Goals?

The original International Development Targets (IDTs) were derived from agreements and resolutions of the world conferences organised by the United Nations in the 1990s. At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, heads of State and representatives of Governments from some 189 countries adopted the Millennium Declaration committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. A set of targets with corresponding indicators were agreed upon and are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1	Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality
Goal 5	Improve maternal health
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development

The eight MDGs are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions, while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. The MDGs are an agreed blueprint that guides development priorities for governments, donors and practitioner agencies worldwide.

The first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and are directed at reducing poverty in all its forms. The last goal - global partnership for development - is about the means to achieve the first seven. Goals 4 and 5 are specifically concerned with improving the health of women and children. There was no target or indicator set at the Millennium Summit for universal access to reproductive health.

Safe motherhood and newborn care

Safe Motherhood

In 1987 the World Bank, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), sponsored a conference on safe motherhood in Nairobi, Kenya to help raise global awareness about the impact of maternal mortality and morbidity. The conference launched the Safe Motherhood Initiative (SMI), which issued an international call to action to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity by one half by the year 2000.

Safe motherhood covers a broad range of direct and indirect efforts to reduce deaths and disabilities resulting from pregnancy and childbirth. Direct efforts include those to ensure that every woman has access to a full range of quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health services. This incorporates recognising the risks encountered during pregnancy, rapid referrals when necessary, professional care of women in childbirth and treatment of obstetric emergencies. Indirect efforts include delaying the age of marriage and first pregnancy and limiting the number of pregnancies. The health and care of the newborn was considered implicit in safe motherhood activities.

The strategies to make motherhood safer and to improve newborn survival include the following:

Maternal Care

- Providing family planning services
- Providing post abortion care
- Promoting antenatal and postnatal care
- Ensuring skilled assistance during childbirth
- Improving essential obstetric care
- Addressing the reproductive health needs of adolescents

Newborn Care

- Cleanliness (clean delivery including clean cord care)
- Thermal protection
- Initiation of breathing (resuscitation if necessary)
- Early and exclusive breast feeding
- Eye care
- Immunisation
- Management of newborn illness
- Care of the pre-term and/or low birth weight baby

What about sexual and reproductive health?

Sexual and reproductive health may be summarised as follows:

- All individuals make informed choices about sexuality and reproduction, for a safe and satisfying sexual life, free of violence and coercion

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