



ANNUAL REPORT 2008



Photos:

Cover:

A young Guatemalan girl raising her hand during class. The girl, a student at a school in El Llano, is participating in a UNFPA-supported programme that aims to increase opportunities for adolescent indigenous girls.

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Foreword:

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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From the Executive Director:

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA.

© Eskinder Debebe/United Nations

Reproductive Health and Safe Motherhood:

Clients waiting at a UNFPA-supported clinic in Panama. The clinic serves the indigenous Ngöbe-Buglé people, who are among the poorest in Latin America.

© Carina Wint for UNFPA

Culture, Gender and Human Rights:

A Bolivian father carrying his son.

© Tom Weller

Helping in Emergencies:

A young girl getting water at a UNFPA-assisted camp for internally displaced persons in Chad.

© Micah Albert

Poverty, Population and Development:

A fisherman casts his net in the water along Wataboo beach in Baucau, Timor-Leste.

© Martine Perret/United Nations

Building Support:

UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador Geri Halliwell in front of the United States Capitol building, where she met with members of Congress in February. The singer spoke with legislators about the serious health issues facing women and mothers worldwide.

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Resources and Management:

A student couple receiving counselling on safe sex and family planning at a youth-friendly service centre located at the University Hospital in Ankara, Turkey. UNFPA provides equipment and supplies to the centre.

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The Mission of UNFPA

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA—because everyone counts.

Foreword

Financial turmoil, climate change, threats to peace and other challenges underscore the interdependence of population, development and environment issues—and the importance of the United Nations Population Fund's life-saving work.

As this report documents, UNFPA strives to ensure that pregnancies are wanted, that young people can protect themselves against HIV, and that women and girls are treated with respect. The Fund also helps to protect vulnerable groups from violence and discrimination, uphold reproductive rights, and empower people to fulfil their potential.

In 2008, UNFPA intensified its efforts to support countries in achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health—work that is all the more critical given that progress on this Goal has been slower than on any other.

The Fund is also assisting many countries in preparing for the 2010 round of censuses. This exercise will yield important data that can help governments to craft effective policies and strategies for tackling poverty and providing social services and opportunities to vulnerable groups and people.

These activities make a tremendous difference in the lives of individuals: the youth who learns to avoid HIV infection; the mother who survives a difficult childbirth; the girl who is able stay in school. And collectively, they will benefit whole societies, helping in response to the global challenges of today while laying the groundwork for a more sustainable tomorrow.

This report details the important achievements of the Fund in 2008; I commend it to policymakers and all others concerned about the future of our world.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

From the Executive Director

World leaders now recognize that improving reproductive health, advancing gender equality and integrating population analysis into development planning can mean the difference between achieving—or missing—the Millennium Development Goals.

In 2008, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, continued to support countries in carrying forward the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. This agenda contributes substantially to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those that aim to end extreme poverty, promote gender equality, improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and combat HIV/AIDS.

By supporting countries to expand sexual and reproductive health services, UNFPA contributed to progress in achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 to improve maternal health. In 2008, UNFPA joined forces with UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the World Bank to accelerate action to reduce maternal deaths in 60 of the most-affected countries. To catalyse funding, UNFPA initiated a \$500 million Maternal Health Trust Fund, which is already helping improve the health of mothers and newborns in 11 countries. UNFPA stands by its belief that no woman should die giving life.

In 2008, the Campaign to End Fistula reached an important milestone when it announced that it had quadrupled in size. The Campaign now reaches more than 45 countries in Africa, Asia and the Arab States, compared to 12 countries when the Campaign was launched in 2003. Since it began, the Campaign has helped more than 12,000 women receive fistula treatment, and more than 20 countries have integrated fistula programmes into their national strategies, policies and plans.

To stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly among women and youth, UNFPA continued to support countries to more fully integrate sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. UNFPA also moved forward to ensure reproductive health commodity security: 80 countries now have national budget lines for contraceptives and other reproductive health supplies.

To support countries in the 2010 census round, UNFPA provided technical and financial assistance. Support was provided to strengthen national capacity for collecting, analysing and using data to guide poverty-reduction programmes and measure progress in meeting internationally agreed development goals.

In 2008, UNFPA responded to humanitarian crises in 50 countries by providing medical supplies and equipment, and technical assistance to governments and partners to help vulnerable women, men and youth, many of whom were internally displaced or refugees.



As in previous years, most of UNFPA's work in 2008 benefited from our indispensable partnership with governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. I firmly believe that partnerships are the only way forward if our ideals of human rights are to become living realities for every man and woman, young and old.

I have worked with committed colleagues in UNFPA to institutionalize a culturally sensitive

approach, a "cultural lens," to our humanitarian and development work. We have done so based on the wisdom we have gained over the years—that sustainable social change must be deeply rooted. At the heart of our work lies a focus on human rights and human dignity. We believe that all individuals have inherent worth and a right to reach their full potential.

Culture was the focus of *The State of the World Population* report in 2008. One of the main messages is that change cannot be imposed from the outside; to be lasting, change must come from within. Our experience shows that cultural knowledge and awareness and working closely with local agents of change serve to promote and protect human rights, including the rights of women.

In 2008, UNFPA convened the first Global Forum of Faith-Based Organizations, which brought together more than 160 religious leaders and representatives of faith-based organizations, culminating in the launch of an Interfaith Network on Population and Development. Members of the Network agreed to work together on issues such as HIV/AIDS, maternal health and ending discrimination and violence against women.

As part of United Nations reform, UNFPA continued to improve accountability, oversight and management. To be closer to those we serve, we relocated regional offices from our New York headquarters to the respective regions. The move will improve connections with countries and foster more rapid response to their needs and also foster better monitoring and evaluation. A top priority is strengthening the capacity of national and regional institutions as networks of knowledge and expertise to support countries in carrying the International Conference on Population and Development agenda forward.

UNFPA takes pride in the progress we made in 2008. Looking forward, we will continue to support countries in maintaining and advancing development gains and protecting the well-being of the most vulnerable, especially women and children, as the financial crisis unwinds and concerted steps are taken towards recovery.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD

Promoting the health of mothers and their children by reducing maternal deaths and injuries, preventing HIV and providing life-saving reproductive health supplies

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