

UNFPA at Work 2001



United Nations
Population Fund

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director

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The Mission of UNFPA

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) extends assistance to developing countries, countries with economies in transition and other countries at their request to help them address reproductive health and population issues, and raises awareness of these issues in all countries, as it has since its inception.

UNFPA's three main areas of work are: to help ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to all couples and individuals on or before the year 2015; to support population and development strategies that enable capacity-building in population programming; to promote awareness of population and development issues; and to advocate for the mobilization of the resources and political will necessary to accomplish its areas of work.

UNFPA is guided by, and promotes, the principles of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). In particular, UNFPA affirms its commitment to reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility, and to the autonomy and empowerment of women everywhere. UNFPA believes that promoting and safeguarding these rights, and promoting the well-being of children, especially girl children, are development goals in themselves. All couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children as well as the right to the information and means to do so.

UNFPA is convinced that meeting these goals will contribute to improving people's quality of life and to the universally accepted aim of stabilizing world population. We also believe that these goals are an integral part of all efforts to achieve sustained and sustainable social and economic development that meets human needs, ensures well-being and protects the natural resources on which all life depends.

UNFPA recognizes that all human rights, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and in other internationally agreed instruments.

UNFPA, as the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population



UNFPA works to ensure access to reproductive health to all couples and individuals—including this young mother from Pakistan.

Photo: Jonette I. Stubbs

and Development, is fully committed to working in partnership with governments, all parts of the United Nations system, development banks, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. UNFPA strongly supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator system and the implementation of all relevant United Nations decisions.

UNFPA will assist in the mobilization of resources from both developed and developing countries, following the commitments made by all countries in the Programme of Action to ensure that the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development are met. •

Foreword

For a young girl growing up in poverty, in a country not yet able to meet the needs of its people, the future may be challenging indeed. She may become pregnant before her body is mature, and married too young in a society that does not fully recognize her rights. Each year, some 500,000 women die in pregnancy and childbirth, and the risk of death for girls under the age of 18 is more than twice that of their older sisters.

But that girl's future can also be one of greater opportunity and choices. As this annual report demonstrates, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) remains both a partner and a leader in the global effort to improve the conditions that trap millions of people in a cycle of poverty, high fertility, ill health and environmental degradation. During 2001, UNFPA contributed its expertise to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. It sought to make motherhood safer in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, and in other areas of crisis, with emergency shipments of reproductive health supplies. And it continued its long-standing work to help countries respond to changing demographic and social conditions and to extend the reach of family planning.

Many challenges lie ahead in the effort to achieve what world leaders called for at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development: universal access to reproductive health care by 2015. We have the vision, the tools and the know-how to achieve this critical step towards reducing poverty worldwide and meeting such United Nations Millennium Development Goals as reducing maternal, infant and child mortality, increasing education, empowering women and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. I hope this report will raise awareness and help mobilize the resources and political will that are the crucial yet still missing ingredients for success.



Kofi A. Annan

Secretary-General of the United Nations



Photo: UN/Milton Grant

Overview

Worldwide, 350 million women are denied access to a range of safe and effective contraceptives. Nearly 175 million pregnancies each year are unwanted or ill-timed. Every day, thousands of young people and pregnant women are infected with HIV. Over 500,000 women die each year during pregnancy and at least 7 million more suffer infection or injury. These problems stand in the way of progress towards poverty reduction, gender equality, slower population growth and sustainable development.

The United Nations Population Fund is strongly committed to addressing these challenges. Progress is evident in this annual report and in the many success stories that give us confidence in the value of our work: in the classroom in Honduras where parents and adolescents grapple with the difficult issue of sex education in the face of HIV/AIDS; in the refugee camp where Afghan women are able to give birth in a clean place with trained assistants; and in the family planning clinic in India where couples come for counselling and contraceptives to plan and space their families.

We have seen dramatic increases in the use of contraceptives and remarkable declines in family size in the decades since UNFPA was founded. When provided with reproductive health information and services, women and couples choose smaller, healthier families. Strong support for the work of the Fund has come directly from the countries it serves.

In 2001, UNFPA continued its complex task of translating the objectives, universal principles and human rights enshrined in the ICPD Programme of Action into programmes that respect the diversity of people's religious and cultural values.

Three basic challenges continued in 2001: ensuring a financially stable Fund, strengthening UNFPA's institutional capacity and addressing the sociocultural context of programme development and delivery. Programmes in family planning, safe motherhood, adolescent reproductive health, HIV prevention and all other core areas carried on and, when possible, were expanded, in response to requests from the governments of more than 140 developing countries.

To better address issues of culture and religion in programming, UNFPA organized a panel of scholars and experts on religion, human rights and globalization in November. A dialogue on these issues may bring about more culturally sensitive programmes that build on the positive cultural values found in all societies.

To help countries plan policies and strategies for population programming, UNFPA supported surveys and censuses; analysed trends in ageing, migration, urbanization and globalization; and articulated the links between reproductive health, gender and environment that have an impact on poverty reduction.

To increase capacity for an intensified response to HIV/AIDS, UNFPA developed a strategic framework,



Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA's Executive Director, assumed office in January 2001.

Photo: United Nations

increased its staff and expanded partnerships throughout the year.

To help countries avoid shortfalls in contraceptives and other supplies, we developed a global strategy that outlines a system for making affordable, quality supplies available to the people who need them.

UNFPA launched its largest-ever humanitarian response in 2001 when hundreds of thousands fled Afghanistan, including thousands of pregnant women. Clean delivery kits and other equipment and supplies were pre-positioned as the crisis escalated and, as the task has shifted to supporting Afghanistan's reconstruction, the Fund has worked to rebuild and restore services.

Working with both women and men, we continued the effort to eliminate violence against women and the discrimination that limits the potential of individuals and nations. Our role in human development, mandated by the United Nations and globally endorsed at the ICPD, is to improve the reproductive health of women, men and young people in the poorest countries—and in so doing, to bring about a more equitable world.

Everything we have learned over the past decade shows that when women are empowered—through economic opportunity, health care and education—the benefits go far beyond the individual. Families, communities and nations are better off. Population growth slows, economic growth is stronger, and countries have more capacity, as well as more room, to make choices that favour sustainability.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid

Executive Director
United Nations Population Fund

Poverty, Population and Development

Challenges ahead

The forces affecting people's lives today are many and powerful—poverty, discrimination, conflict and instability, migration, urbanization, globalization, environmental degradation, the increasing size of a younger generation now in their reproductive years, and the ageing of an older generation threatened by poverty, isolation and ill-health. These forces pose many dangers to those who are vulnerable, especially poor women and girls.

Half of all people live on less than \$2 a day, and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Poverty and environmental stress are likely to intensify globally as a result of rapid population growth from a current 6.1 billion to 9.3 billion worldwide by mid-century—all of the growth will occur in developing countries. Discrimination and violence against women continue to deprive individuals of their rights and nations of great potential. HIV/AIDS continues to take people in their prime from families and countries in desperate need of their skills and strength.

Need is growing worldwide for the information and services promoted by UNFPA. Population growth, the HIV/AIDS crisis and escalating emergency situations are increasing demand, yet resources are not keeping pace.

Millennium goals

We know what needs to be done. Action in our new century was spelled out in the UN Millennium Declaration of September 2000, when heads of state and government declared a commitment to halve extreme poverty, ensure primary education for boys and girls alike, reduce maternal mortality, and halt the spread of HIV/AIDS. UNFPA is contributing to the Millennium Development Goals by advancing the principles of the ICPD (Cairo, 1994). The consensus is global: at the ICPD, 179 countries called for gender equality and women's empowerment and universal access to primary education and reproductive health services, including family planning, by 2015.

UNFPA supports development that is sustainable, gender-sensitive and people-centred. With country offices in 112 nations, we assist governments in identifying priorities, developing and managing population programmes, and tracking progress. Our system of monitoring, evaluation and reporting ensures cost-effectiveness and measurable results. Many countries are making real progress in reproductive health, particularly in family planning.



A member of a UNFPA-supported industrial sewing collective in Jordan. The collective provides a steady income for 10 young women.

Photo: UNFPA/Don Hinrichsen



Census-takers in Sierra Leone, where a peace process is taking hold after devastating warfare. Since the last census in 1985, there have been massive displacements of people within and outside of the country. The Government will use the socio-economic and demographic data to plan policies and strategies for recovery and development.

Photo: Tuen Voeten

Countries have adopted policies and established administrative frameworks, trained new workers and upgraded skills, and extended services to new groups of people and into new areas.

The equal rights of women and men are fundamental values of the Millennium Declaration and the UNFPA mandate. Laws that guarantee women's rights, health care that protects women's well-being and education that ensures women's active participation benefit the individual woman, her family, her community and her

country. Programmes for poor women and girls—who today receive less schooling, less food, less health care and less pay for their work compared to their brothers—are helping bring about change. Indeed, investments in social services, especially for girls, spur economic growth. Empowering women as full partners in sustainable development is essential to combat poverty and environmental degradation, secure democracy and find lasting global harmony.

Population strategies

One of the three main areas of UNFPA's work is to support population and development strategies that enable capacity-building in population programming. UNFPA provides much-needed financial and technical support to gather accurate social and economic information through surveys and censuses. We also work with researchers to analyse the impact of trends on populations today and in the future.

- In 2001, UNFPA worked with the UN Secretary-General's office and UN agencies to develop indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.
- A study of 44 countries was conducted to determine the extent to which reproductive health, gender and population and environment were included in their poverty reduction strategy papers.
- To track the commitment of governments to UNFPA programmes, in 2001 a report featuring country case studies was produced with the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute.

Census data for planning

Good governance requires good population data, and that means a country must conduct a national census at least once every 10 years. Reliable social and economic data is the basis on which nations determine priorities and allocate and monitor resources.

- As part of a five-year project to assist Cambodia in developing a national policy on population and development, UNFPA is supporting efforts to improve research, and to collect, analyse and disseminate new population-related data.
- UNFPA provided Eritrea with 20 all-terrain vehicles to help it prepare for its first census, making it possible to reach remote and nomadic populations and to transport field mapping teams and census and survey enumerators.
- In Mongolia, the national award for Best Statistician was presented to UNFPA's representative in the country, Linda Demers, for her work in strengthening and reforming the country's National Statistical Office.

- India completed the 2001 census of its billion-strong population with support from UNFPA to train enumerators and census supervisors, and to produce television spots in regional languages.
- Counting of Mauritania's nomadic populations was completed in February 2001. UNFPA provided long-term technical assistance for the census, which will be used to plan for the restoration of health centres and provision of medical equipment and reproductive health supplies.
- UNFPA met with donors, partner countries and multi-lateral agencies in Pretoria, South Africa, to mobilize resources for poor countries to conduct censuses and to explore strategies for reducing costs.

Millennium Development Goals

All 189 United Nations Member States have pledged to meet these goals by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger—reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and suffering from hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education—ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women —eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education;
4. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five;
5. Improve maternal health—reducing by three

The ageing poor

The older poor in developing countries, a majority of whom are women, are often overlooked by policies and programmes. Inadequate pension schemes and the erosion of traditional family support by migration, urbanization and other factors leave many older people in extreme difficulty. Many of the 374 million older persons



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