

MANDATE AND GOALS

UNFPA's work is guided by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. Each provides benchmarks for national efforts to reduce poverty, promote health and gender equality, and protect the environment.

Central to the ICPD vision is the goal of universal access to reproductive health, so that all can exercise their rights to choose the number and spacing of their children, deliver safely and avoid HIV infection.



Enabling couples and individuals to manage their fertility, the ICPD agreed, is critical to alleviating poverty. It also recognized that gender equality is a human right, and empowering women is essential for advancing development.

APRO aims to integrate the ICPD agenda and the MDGs in development strategies for Asian and Pacific countries.

UNFPA's priorities - including safe motherhood, family planning, HIV prevention, adolescents' health, women's rights, and data for development - support attainment of the eight MDGs.

Gender and human rights concerns are central to all aspects of UNFPA's work. Cultural sensitivity facilitates understanding of the communities we support.



HIV PREVENTION

HIV prevalence is low in most Asian countries, but the most populous ones have concentrated epidemics among groups that practise risky behaviours. The people most at risk of infection are not receiving adequate information or services.

UNFPA emphasizes the links between reproductive health and HIV prevention. It promotes greater availability and use of condoms, works to strengthen prevention efforts among women and supports family planning services for women living with HIV.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The Asia/Pacific region has over 970 million young people aged 10-24. Cultural and policy barriers limit the availability of sexual and reproductive health information and services. While the age of marriage has increased, girls in several countries are typically married before age 18. Early childbearing is dangerous, but many married adolescents lack access to contraception.

UNFPA aims to overcome obstacles to meeting young people's sexual and reproductive health needs. It advocates including life skills in school curriculums, supports peer education in and outside of schools, and helps health ministries and NGOs make information and youth-friendly services more available.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women and girls in Asia and the Pacific face severe social inequality. Deep-rooted beliefs and practices support their subordinate position in many societies. They are poorly represented in positions of authority. Discrimination in access to services jeopardizes their health. Violence against them is widespread and takes many forms.



UNFPA works to end discrimination, harmful practices and violence against women and girls through advocacy, training and coalition building. Various initiatives address early and forced marriage, prenatal sex selection, domestic abuse and sexual violence in emergencies.

APRO is active in a UN interagency programme that mobilizes men and boys to oppose gender-based violence. It promotes inter-country exchanges to help health-care institutions better serve women who have undergone abuse. And it compiles evidence to advocate stronger enforcement of laws protecting women and girls.

POPULATION DYNAMICS

Asia is home to two thirds of the world's people. Growth has slowed, but not in all countries. Populations are becoming more urban and some are rapidly growing older.

Understanding how population growth, movements and age structure changes affect development is essential to meeting challenges like poverty, migration, ageing and climate change.

UNFPA helps countries collect, analyse and use demographic and health data to inform planning. APRO is providing technical support to the 2010 round of censuses and health surveys, and working to strengthen countries' statistical capacity. One aim is to disaggregate data by sex, to understand how policies may affect women and men differently.

In addition, APRO supports research, policy analysis and training on population dynamics, working with academic and government institutions and other partners.



SAVING MOTHERS' LIVES

Tens of thousands of Asian women die yearly during pregnancy and childbirth. Most could be saved with access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care. In South Asia, skilled health personnel attend only two out of five births.

MDG 5, focusing on maternal health, is the goal farthest from realization. Many countries in the region are not on track to reduce maternal deaths by 75% or ensure universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

UNFPA advocates for greater national and donor support for reproductive health as a human right. It supports midwifery training programmes and service guidelines, and promotes South-South sharing of experience, health sector reform and policies to expand coverage for the poor.

Reducing unwanted pregnancies and births to adolescents could save thousands of mothers' lives. UNFPA helps countries forecast family planning demand and procure and manage contraceptive supplies.

During conflicts and natural disasters, UNFPA works to ensure that displaced women have access to family planning, prenatal care and safe delivery care.



OUR MISSION

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.



REGIONAL OFFICE (APRO)

The Asia and the Pacific Regional Office has a team of technical and programme experts. They help UNFPA country offices support national programmes, at the request of governments.

Through its regional programme, APRO engages in advocacy and policy dialogue, supports research and organizes training for governments and partners in population and development, sexual and reproductive health, and gender equality.

Partners include regional institutions, parliamentarians, civil society and faith-based organizations, and indigenous people's networks.

APRO also facilitates South-South exchanges of experience, and is active in efforts to make development assistance and UN system support more coherent and effective.

WHERE WE WORK

The UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office opened in Bangkok in 2008 to strengthen support to countries. It oversees a network of 23 country offices and two sub-regional offices in Kathmandu, Nepal, and Suva, Fiji. The Suva office covers 14 Pacific island countries.



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