



# Poverty, Population and Development

Integrating reproductive health into national strategies to attain the Millennium Development Goals and eradicate poverty.

Gender equality reduces poverty and saves and improves lives. Global efforts to “make poverty history” are bound to fail if world leaders do not act now to end gender discrimination, UNFPA cautioned in the *State of World Population 2005* report. Unless they live up to promises made to the world’s women and young people, these leaders will not be able to meet poverty reduction goals agreed to at the 2000 Millennium Summit and reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit.

For more than 30 years, UNFPA has been in the forefront of advocating for women, promoting legal and policy reforms and gender-sensitive data collection, and supporting projects that improve women’s health and expand their choices in life.

## MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Education, reproductive health and economic opportunity for women are three particularly strategic interventions necessary for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Also critical is the elimination of violence against women.

- The future dividends of investing in reproductive health were outlined in the 2005 UNFPA report, *Reducing Poverty and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Arguments for Investing in Reproductive Health & Rights*. These dividends would be reflected in healthier, more productive individuals and families, which would contribute to stronger, wealthier nations.
- UNFPA joined United Nations agencies, NGOs and the Government of Finland in sponsoring “Chasing the Dream: Youth Faces of the Millennium Development Goals”, a photo exhibition, collection of essays and website profiling the lives of eight young people in eight places around the world with an intense desire to lead better lives.
- As part of a global review of efforts to attain the MDGs, UNFPA conducted an assessment of the situation of women in Thailand. The study, *Reproductive Health of Women in Thailand: Progress and Challenges Towards Attainment of International Development Goals*, found that Thai women enjoy better reproductive health than they did 10 years ago, thanks to policies recognizing the links between health and poverty alleviation.
- UNFPA continued in 2005 to advance development goals through approaches based on human rights and respect for cultural diversity. The commitment to rights-based programming was presented in the publication *Rights into Action: UNFPA Implements Human Rights-Based Approach*. The Fund also published the results of a survey that asked 165 countries about the impact of culture, *Culture in the Context of UNFPA Programming: ICPD+10 Survey Results on Culture*

## THE GOALS

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:**  
Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and suffering from hunger;
2. **Achieve universal primary education:**  
Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling;
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women:**  
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education;
4. **Reduce child mortality:**  
Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under the age of five;
5. **Improve maternal health:**  
Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio;
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases:**  
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases;
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability:**  
Integrate sustainable development into country policies and programmes, reduce by half the number of people lacking access to safe drinking water and improve the lives of slum dwellers;
8. **Develop a global partnership for development:**  
Address poverty reduction, good governance, open trading, the special needs of the least developed countries and landlocked and small island states, debt, youth employment and access to essential drugs and technologies.



An Indian man with his son.

and Religion. It found that in many cases, culture was viewed as both a contributing factor and a constraint to development.

## DATA AND POPULATION STRATEGIES

Reliable, age-specific and sex-disaggregated data are needed for effective planning and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies and other national initiatives related to the MDGs.

- UNFPA has been helping governments create policies that respond to the impact of population ageing and meet the needs of older persons, especially the poor and women.
- In 2005, the Fund conducted a tracer study to determine the impact of support given over 10 years to training programmes of the United Nations International Institute on Ageing, in Malta.
- UNFPA increased the capacity of staff to work with *DevInfo*, the information system for tracking progress towards the MDGs now used by more than 80 countries. Goals and targets are imbedded in the

system, linked to 53 MDG indicators in a goal-monitoring framework.

- Research on indigenous populations provided data that informed UNFPA efforts to improve policies and programmes. In Brazil, a situational analysis studied the lives of 1,600 families in 91 Sateré-Mawé settlements. In Chile, more than a decade of research related to the reproductive health of indigenous populations was systematically reviewed, and a study was carried out on the impact of health and education policies on the Aymarás. In Paraguay, research looked at community midwives, myths, culture and experiences with sexual and reproductive health services among the Mbya.
- UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO supported an assessment of maternal and neonatal health in Zimbabwe. The research helped develop a road map with more than 30 immediate- and medium-term interventions to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

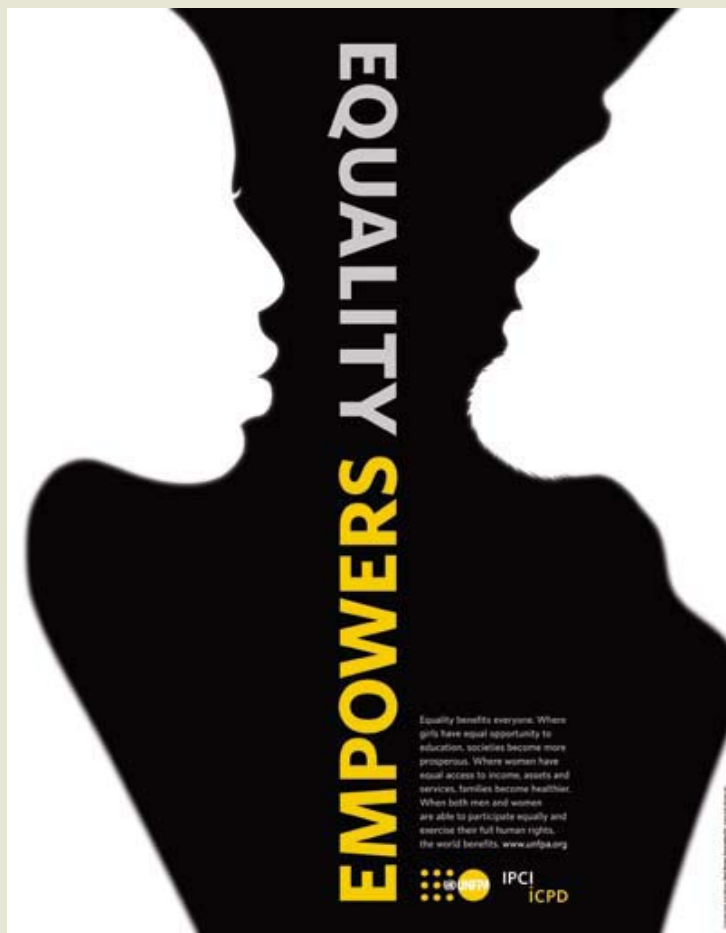
## CENSUS DATA FOR PLANNING

Accurate demographic data provide a sound foundation for development planning, helping to ensure that basic needs are met.

- The United Nations Statistical Division and UNFPA organized a meeting to prepare for the next round of censuses. The report of the February meeting in New York, *Advocacy and Resource Mobilization for the 2010 Round of Censuses*, detailed past problems, proposed new strategies and outlined an advocacy plan to ensure that data is widely disseminated and effectively used in national planning.
- The National University of Uzbekistan agreed to revise its demography curriculum and introduce modern methods, with UNFPA support, which build on past purchases of data processing and office equipment.
- UNFPA identified a severe shortage of funds for training in preparation for the first population census in Sudan in more than 20 years. Planning by UNFPA in 2005 focused on training for policymakers and the public to raise awareness of the importance of the census, and training in the technical and computer skills required to carry it out.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Universal access to reproductive health is a goal indispensable to efforts to end poverty. In 2005, UNFPA continued to assist countries with Poverty Reduction Strategies, supporting the drafting of national road maps with plans to achieve the MDGs. UNFPA also ensured the inclusion of popula-



## WORLD POPULATION DAY

Gender equality is the theme of this UNFPA poster, which was designed for World Population Day, 11 July. Throughout the world, the Day was marked with events that raised awareness of population and development issues and affirmed the fact that human rights benefit everyone—men, women, boys and girls alike. In Bangladesh, World Population Day celebrations included a rally through Dhaka despite the heavy monsoon showers. In Eritrea, celebrations featured the staging of a drama accompanied by music written, directed and performed by the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students. Fiji observed the Day with advocacy initiatives, including radio talk shows, panel discussions, school awareness activities, and a one-week media campaign. In Nicaragua, activities included a workshop at the Condega Military Base outside Managua to educate army officers on the subject of domestic violence. And in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Pioneering Oriental Orchestra, the only all-female group of musicians in the country, marked the occasion with a performance at the Damascus Opera House.

tion issues in the frameworks for domestic policies and programmes that aim to reduce poverty in low-income countries.

- United Nations Member States have emphasized the need to integrate reproductive health goals into efforts to eradicate poverty, improve maternal health, reduce infant and child deaths, promote gender equality and combat HIV/AIDS. Concluding the 2005 session of the Commission on Population and Development, they noted the contribution of the ICPD to the world's development goals, including the MDGs. This conclusion was adopted by the 2005 World Summit.
- Swaziland developed a national population policy in 2005, creating a framework for integrating population issues within the mainstream of development. UNFPA supported the Government's Population Unit to finalize a National Implementation Plan of Action for the national population policy, and also helped complete the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme.
- In Mozambique, UNFPA's support for poverty reduction and MDG monitoring included chairing the United Nations Gender Coordination Group and ensuring the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health issues in a sector-wide approach for health.
- How to convince a country that no poverty reduction strategy is complete unless it includes population issues was the subject of a guide for UNFPA country offices produced in 2005: *Contributing to National Poverty Reduction Strategies: A UNFPA Action Guide*.
- Sustainable development depends in part on the good health of people working to stay out of poverty. However, the loss of workers to migration is "overwhelming" the world's health-care systems, warned UNFPA in its 2005 report on *International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals*, which cited acute shortages of health workers in Africa.