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WORLD POPULATION DAY 2008

Global Observances to Highlight Benefits of Family Planning

UNITED NATIONS, New York, 10 July 2008—More than 140 countries worldwide will observe World Population Day on 11 July by emphasizing the importance of family planning for the well-being of families, communities and nations, and by underlining the need to further integrate such services into national development plans.

The theme of World Population Day 2008, “Family Planning: It’s a Right; Let’s Make it Real”, provides a chance to raise awareness of the many benefits of family planning, including its vital role in enhancing maternal health, gender equality and poverty reduction.

World leaders have proclaimed that individuals have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, yet modern contraception remains out of reach for hundreds of millions of women and men. World Population Day activities will vary in scope and nature, ranging from rallies, performances and exhibitions, to sports competitions, seminars and cultural events. They will all have one thing in common, which is to reaffirm the right of people to plan their family size, thereby helping to make this right real.

In his World Population Day message, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: “Studies show that family planning has immediate benefits for the lives and health of mothers and their infants.” He added, “On World Population Day, let us focus on the critical importance of family planning if we are to successfully achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

“Let us take action to reduce maternal mortality and achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015,” said Mr. Ban. “Let us devote greater attention and resources to the work to improve the health and quality of life for all people.”

In a separate message, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, said that family planning “is essential to women’s empowerment and gender equality. When a woman can plan her family, she can plan the rest of her life.

“Family planning is also an effective means in the fight against poverty,” said Ms. Obaid. “Parents can plan ahead and devote more of their resources to the education and health of each child.”

Related links:

World Population Day 2008: <http://www.unfpa.org/wpd/index.html>

Family Planning Media Kit: <http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning/mediakit/>

Family Planning: So that Every Pregnancy is Wanted: <http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning.htm>



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