

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS TO UNITED NATIONS POPULATION AWARD CEREMONY

New York, 3 June 2010

*Delivered by Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro,
Deputy Secretary-General*

Ms. Obaid

Members of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 27th United Nations Population Award ceremony.

This award recognizes the special contribution of individuals and organizations to public awareness of population questions and their solutions.

Population is not only about statistics, pie charts and projections.

It concerns some of the most basic elements of human life: freedom from poverty... education... women's empowerment... realizing the potential of every human being.

This award has a long list of distinguished laureates, who have had a clear impact on development thinking. It continues to generate strong interest from the international community. And this year's field of nominees is stronger than ever.

All this is ample testimony that the Award has succeeded in its objective.

I would like to send my heartfelt congratulations to this year's winners in the Individual category: Bill and Melinda Gates.

Likewise, I would like to pay tribute to the winners in the Institutional Category: the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

Bill and Melinda Gates were chosen for their contributions to the education and health of people in need around the world. They have had a spectacular impact on child survival and health, and in creating opportunities for millions.

They have stirred the minds and hearts of others in positions of power to invest and support new ways to help the poor and vulnerable.

And they have demonstrated an exemplary humility about their life-changing contributions.

The tens of billions of dollars in endowments, grants and commitments grab the headlines. But the reach of the Gates Foundation is even more remarkable. It supports grantees in every American state and the District of Columbia, and finances activities in more than 100 countries.

It is the largest privately-operated foundation in the world.

I particularly commend the Gates' leadership on reproductive health, family planning and maternal and newborn health. It is simply shameful that hundreds of thousands of women die in childbirth every year, from causes that are entirely preventable.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is an outstanding example of the promotion of excellence in population assistance.

This year's second laureate, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, is globally recognized as a pioneer in the field of parliamentary action on population matters.

It launched the concept of National Parliamentary Committees on Population and Development, which have become the worldwide model.

It was instrumental in the creation of the Regional Parliamentarians Forum in Africa and Europe.

It has successfully pushed for the introduction of legislation on the elimination of violence against women and on the full spectrum of population issues, including AIDS, reproductive health, family planning, ageing, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Forum has also promoted dialogue between young people and parliamentarians. It, too, is a worthy recipient of this award.

The contributions of our two winners speak for themselves.

The issues they are dealing with are not just central to development. They are fundamental to promoting UN values and protecting the rights of all individuals.

Every human being counts. With these awards, and with the daily efforts of UNFPA, we are sending a message about the strength of our commitment to building a world in which everyone, each and every woman, man and child, has the opportunity and the means to fulfill his or her potential.

I congratulate our two winners. Their outstanding work will continue to make a lasting contribution to our global mission of peace, justice and human dignity.

Thank you.