Core Mandate and Priority Areas

The mandate of UNFPA, as established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1973 and reaffirmed in 1993, is (1) to build the knowledge and the capacity to respond to needs in population and family planning; (2) to promote awareness in both developed and developing countries of population problems and possible strategies to deal with these problems; (3) to assist their population problems in the forms and means best suited to the individual countries' needs; (4) to assume a leading role in the United Nations system in promoting population programmes, and to coordinate projects supported by the Fund.

At the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) these broad ideas were fleshed out in greater detail and developed to give more emphasis to the gender and human rights dimensions of population issues. UNFPA was given the lead role in helping countries carry out the Programme of Action, which was adopted by 179 governments at the Cairo Conference. Subsequent international agreements at ICPD+5, the Millennium Summit (2000) and the World Summit (2005) have linked UNFPA’s mandate with specific, time-bound goals, and given greater emphasis to the Fund’s role in HIV prevention and poverty reduction.

The three core areas of our work - reproductive health, gender equality and population and development strategies - are inextricably related. Population dynamics, including growth rates, age structure, fertility and mortality, migration and more, influence every aspect of human, social and economic development. Reproductive health and women's empowerment powerfully affect, and are affected by, population trends.

New Strategic Plan: 2011-2013

In September 2011, following an extensive review of UNFPA’s recent work, as well as the changing context within which it operates, a new, more focused Strategic Plan was adopted by the Executive Board. It will guide the Fund’s work through 2013.

“Through the new plan we seek to sharpen the focus of our work during the next two years from 2012 through 2013—based on evidence and lessons learned,” UNFPA Executive Director told the Executive Board. “These efforts will create a more dynamic, effective and accountable UNFPA.”

At the centre of the new plan is advancing the right to sexual and reproductive health by accelerating progress towards MDG5: to improve maternal health. Priority will be given to advancing two key MDG targets: to reduce maternal deaths and to achieve universal access to reproductive health, including family planning.
Through this sharpened focus, the Fund aims to improve the lives of underserved populations, especially women, youth and adolescents. These efforts will be guided by our expertise in population dynamics, human rights and gender equality, driven by country needs and tailored to the specific country context.

**Comparative Advantages and Key Constraints**

**Meeting Development Goals**

UNFPA works in partnership with governments, other agencies and civil society to advance its mission. Two frameworks guide its efforts: The Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight time-bound targets to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. Because the dates for achieving these interconnected sets of goals and related targets are fast approaching, considerable work has been done to analyze what has worked, galvanize support and redouble efforts.

**Population and Development Strategies**

The fact that world population reached 7 billion people in 2011 (up from 2.5 billion in 1950) has profound implications for development. Governments need to be able to gather adequate information about population dynamics and trends in order to create and manage sound policies and generate the political will to appropriately address both current and future needs. UNFPA supports governments in every aspect of this task, including censuses, surveys and population
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

and development-related research and analysis. Key areas of focus include migration, ageing, climate change and urbanization. The 7 Billion Actions campaign, spearheaded by UNFPA and partners, is an attempt to engage people from all walks of life and places in the world in these issues.

Sexual and Reproductive Health
Working with a wide range of partners, UNFPA assists governments in delivering sexual and reproductive health care throughout the lifecycle of women. Areas of assistance include:

- Voluntary family planning
- Antenatal, safe delivery and post-natal care
- Prevention of abortion and management of its consequences
- Treatment of reproductive tract infections
- Prevention, care and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- Information, education and counseling, as appropriate, on human sexuality and reproductive health;
- Prevention of violence against women, care for survivors of violence and other actions to eliminate traditional harmful practices
- Appropriate referrals for further diagnosis and management of the above.

Improving maternal health, MDG5, is a key priority for UNFPA and the goal which lags farthest behind. Key initiatives in this area include the Maternal Health Thematic Fund, the Campaign to End Fistula and numerous partnerships. The importance of universal access to reproductive health is underscored by the fact that it was added as an MDG target by the international community in 2005.

Access to reproductive health care also demands what UNFPA calls for reproductive health commodity security, the ability for all individuals to obtain and use affordable, quality reproductive health supplies of their choice whenever they need them. This is the aim of the Global Programme on Reproductive Health Commodity Security, which UNFPA spearheads. Expanding access to reproductive health care also relies on skilled midwives and other health care workers.

Family Planning

Globally some 215 million women worldwide who would like to avoid or delay a pregnancy lack access to effective contraception. Fulfilling the unmet need for modern family planning in the
developing world would reduce unintended pregnancies from 75 million to 22 million. UNFPA advocates for the right of all people to voluntarily decide the number and timing of their children. It supports programmes that improve access to and affordability of family planning services, offer a broad selection of choices, reflect high standards of quality of care, are sensitive to cultural conditions, provide sufficient information about their use and address women’s other reproductive health needs.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment to development progress is underscored by the fact that this was selected as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Beyond being a goal in itself, gender equality is also a driver for all the MDGs, and is intimately linked and specifically connected to goals to improve maternal and newborn health and reduce the spread of HIV.

UNFPA’s gender framework incorporates four strategic linkages that address critical factors underlying inequalities and rights violations: girls' education, women's economic empowerment, women's political participation and the balancing of reproductive and productive roles.

The Fund brings gender issues to wider attention, and promotes legal and policy reforms and gender-sensitive data collection. It works to end gender-based violence, including traditional practices that harm women, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting as well as pre-natal sex selection. We also raise awareness of women's specific strengths, vulnerabilities and needs in relation to a variety of issues, such as humanitarian emergencies, climate change and migration. UNFPA recognizes the rights, perspectives and influence of men and boys, and seeks to involve them in efforts to promote gender equality and improve reproductive health.

Cross-Cutting Concerns

Promoting and protecting fundamental human rights, including reproductive rights, are at the core of all UNFPA activities. This is one of the reasons the Fund places priority on reaching those in the greatest need, whether because of poverty, marginalization, emergencies, age, sex, ethnicity or health status.

Culturally sensitive, human rights-based approaches

A strong emphasis on the human rights, including reproductive rights, of individual women and men underpins all of UNFPA's work and its way of working. Promoting and protecting human
rights, including reproductive rights, of women and men requires considerable cultural fluency because UNFPA works in some of the most sensitive and intimate spheres of human existence, including sexuality, gender relations and population issues. Since 2002, UNFPA has emphasized the integration of culturally sensitive approaches into programming efforts. Toward this end, it has worked closely within communities and with local agents of change, including religious leaders and faith-based organizations.

Supporting adolescents and youth

About a quarter of the world's people are between the ages of 10 and 24. UNFPA promotes and protects the rights of this important generation of young people, particularly adolescent girls, and works towards a world in which girls and boys have optimal opportunities to develop their full potential, to express themselves freely and have their views respected, and to live free of HIV, poverty, discrimination and violence.

UNFPA’s 'four keys' to opening up opportunities for young people include incorporating youth issues into national development and poverty reduction strategies; expanding access to gender-sensitive sexual and reproductive health education that encourages the development of life skills; promoting a core package of health services and commodities for young people; and encouraging youth leadership and participation.

Responding to the AIDS epidemic

The contribution of UNFPA to the global response to AIDS is shaped by its mandate to reduce poverty, eliminate gender inequality and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health. As a co-sponsor of UNAIDS and under the UNAIDS division of labour, UNFPA focuses its response on HIV prevention among young people, women and marginalized groups, including within the context of sex work. It supports comprehensive programming for male and female condoms and advocates for the linking and integration of sexual and reproductive health and HIV policies, programmes and services. UNFPA ensures that family planning and maternal health services meet the needs of women living with HIV. This includes interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission and support for confidential voluntary HIV testing and counseling.

UNFPA also works in many contexts, including humanitarian and post-conflict situations, toward the elimination of gender-based violence and prevention of HIV.
Assisting in emergencies

In times of upheaval, pregnancy-related deaths and sexual violence soar. Reproductive health and obstetric services often become unavailable. Young people become more vulnerable to HIV infection and sexual exploitation. Too often, the special needs of women and young people are overlooked in humanitarian emergencies.

Within the coordinated, inter-agency response to disasters, UNFPA takes the lead in providing supplies and services to protect reproductive health, with an emphasis on the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and young people. Both groups can figure prominently in rebuilding peace or communities.

UNFPA supports various data collection activities, including censuses to provide detailed information for planning and rapid health assessments to allow for appropriate, effective and efficient relief. It also assists stricken communities as they move beyond the acute crisis and enter the reconstruction phase.

How We Work

UNFPA works in partnership with governments, along with other United Nations agencies, communities, NGOs, foundations and the private sector to raise awareness and mobilize the support and resources needed to achieve its mission. The Fund is fully committed to a more effective, coherent and better coordinated United Nations system that 'delivers as one', which is the essence of the ongoing United Nations reform process.

UNFPA has just over 2,000 staff members. It is headquartered in New York, where the following divisions/offices are based: the Office of the Executive Director, the Office of the Security Coordinator, the Information and External Relations Division, the Division for Human Resources, the Division for Management Services, the Division for Oversight Services, the Programme Division and the Technical Division. In order to work more closely with key constituencies, UNFPA maintains liaison offices in Brussels, Copenhagen, Geneva, Tokyo and Washington, DC.

Starting in 2007, UNFPA restructured in order to become a more field-centered, efficient and strategic partner to the countries it serves. Toward this end, it established five regional and six sub-regional offices in the field that help coordinate work in about 150 countries, areas and territories through a network of 129 country offices.
Donor contributions to UNFPA and other income in 2010 reached a record $870 million, up from $783 million a year earlier. Twenty one donors each made contributions exceeding $1 million and that the contribution from the Netherlands—UNFPA’s largest donor in 2010—totaled more than $119 million.

How RCs can assist us with our priorities

UNFPA is fully committed to a more effective, coherent and better coordinated United Nations system that delivers as one in the spirit of United Nations reform. As a key player in the United Nations operational activities for development at the country level, UNFPA emphasizes the impact of programme delivery on the development prospects of our partner countries as the principal driver of the United Nations mission and reform.

UNFPA Representatives will provide support to the RC and the UN Country Team by:

- Leading/participating in major thematic group(s)
- Leading/supporting efforts to promote UN common services/business functions
- Participating in/contributing to major programming initiatives (ie: CCA/UNDAF, etc.)
- Contributing in the assessment of UNCT members

In turn, Resident Coordinators can assist UNFPA by being advocates for the ICPD Programme of Action and supporting UNFPA’s efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, reduce maternal mortality, and accelerate progress on the ICPD agenda and Millennium Development Goal 5. In addition, in countries where UNFPA has a Country Director who is based in a neighboring country, the Resident Coordinator, in their role as UNDP Resident Representative, also serves as the UNFPA Representative.
Contact Information

**UNFPA Headquarters in New York**
605 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10158 USA
Tel: +1 (212) 297-5000 Email: hq@unfpa.org Website: www.unfpa.org

Regional Offices

**UNFPA Africa Regional Office (ARO)**
7 Naivasha Road, Sunninghill, Johannesburg, 2157 Republic of South Africa
PO Box 2980, Sunninghill, Johannesburg, 2157 Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 11 603 5300 Email: aro.info@unfpa.org

**UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO)**
4th Floor, UN Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Tel: +662 6870100; +662 2803320 Email: apro@unfpa.org

**UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (ASRO)**
WHO-EMRO Building, Abdel Razzak El-Sanhoury St., of Makram Obaid, Nasr City, Cairo, Egypt
Mailing Address: UNFPA, c/o WHO EMRO 7F, Abdel Razak El Sauhouri St., Cairo, Egypt
Tel: +20-2-227-65675

**UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO)**
Hakki Yeten Caddesi Selenium Plaza, No: 10/C Kat 18-19, 34349 Besiktas, Istanbul, Turkey
Tel: +90 212 705 36 66 Email: eecaro@unfpa.org

**UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO)**
Calle Gonzalo Crance, Buildings 180 and 178, Clayton, Panama
Mailing Address: 0819-05650, El Dorado, Panama
Tel: +507-305-5500 Email: lacro.panama@unfpa.org

**Resources**
UNFPA Publications: https://www.unfpa.org/public/global/publications
UNFPA Video Library: http://video.unfpa.org/

**Media Inquiries**
If you need information for newspaper, TV, radio or other media reports, please call +1 (212) 297 5031 or consult the detailed media list, which lists contacts by region, language and areas of expertise.