



United Nations Population Fund

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The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 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. UNFPA began operations in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and was placed under the UN General Assembly's direct authority in 1972, raising it to the same status as UNDP and UNICEF. In 1987, the name of UNFPA was changed to the United Nations Population Fund, but the acronym, UNFPA, remained the same. In 1994, UNFPA was designated the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up and implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. UNFPA is a founding member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and a founding co-sponsor of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. UNFPA supports programmes in over 140 countries, areas and territories. UNFPA's collaboration with Iran began in 1970 on a project basis. The collaboration on the basis of five-year country programmes began in 1990. The current country programme, the fourth since 1990, was launched in 2005 in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) UNFPA's support has yielded tangible results which are well manifested in population and reproductive health indicators. Since 1990, maternal mortality ratio has been cut by 80 %; contraceptive prevalence rate has increased from 64% to 79% for all methods; and prenatal care and attended deliveries at hospitals and maternity centres is now almost universal. Such achievements would not have been possible without Government commitment, decisive national population policies, support of religious leaders and the strong partnership between UNFPA, government and civil society. UNFPA is currently preparing its 5th Country Programme according to the priorities of the 5th National Development Plan with close collaboration and coordination with the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran.

UNFPA works in partnership with governments, as well as with other agencies and civil society broadly, to advance its mission. Two frameworks serve to focus its efforts: The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Because the dates for achievement of these interconnected sets of goals and related targets are fast approaching, considerable work has been done in analyzing what has worked, and to galvanize support and a redoubling of efforts. 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. UNFPA helps governments, at their request, to formulate policies and strategies to reduce poverty and support sustainable development. The Fund also assists countries to collect and analyze population data that can help them understand population trends. UNFPA's current 4th country programme in Iran is in line with the 4th National Development Plan. All the priority interventions are addressed in a culturally sensitive manner ensuring national ownership and leadership of development programmes. In light of the Iran's significant achievements in the area of population and RH, UNFPA's cooperation attaches priority to: sustaining the achievements of the past two decades with special focus on capacity development of local institutions; Bridging regional disparities in RH indicators; Improving quality of RH care and programme delivery in general; Addressing areas of ICPD Programme of Action which have not been adequately addressed, such as adolescent RH, HIV/AIDS, emerging population issues (aging, environment, urbanization, etc) and gender; Incorporating RH/FP issues to the Humanitarian programmes of the country including Emergency and Disaster plans; Promoting exchange of knowledge and experiences between Iran and other countries.

The 4th UNFPA Country Programme for Iran builds on previous achievements and contributes to enhancing the quality of life of the Iranian people. The goals of the programme are threefold:

- increased availability of and access to quality reproductive health information and services;
- improved production of gender-sensitive data and increasing national capacity to monitor the implementation of ICPD goals and MDGs; and
- enhanced institutional mechanisms and socio-cultural practices that promote and protect the rights of women and girls and advance gender equity.

There are eight outputs and a number of interventions associated with the three goals as follows:

- Increased availability of quality RH services and commodities through: production of protocols and guidelines on safe motherhood and family planning; promoting the concept of mother-friendly hospitals; training of midwives and gynecologists on natural birth; and developing integrated monitoring and evaluation systems of RH services
- Improved youth friendly RH information and services through: development of national strategy and plan of action on adolescent reproductive health; developing and piloting youth -friendly RH services and supporting parent-student association
- Improved STI/HIV/AIDS information and services through: development of guidelines on STI prevalence assessment, management and reporting and promoting prevention of STI/HIV among high risk groups
- Increased awareness and capacity relating to RH, reproductive rights and gender issues
- Strengthened national capacity and preparedness to address RH concerns in emergency and post conflict situations through: development of a national plan of action and protocols on RH in emergencies, establishment of rapid response teams and stockpiling of emergency RH commodities and supplies
- Increased capacity to monitor ICPD goals and MDGs through: generating gender-sensitive data, harmonizing data systems and improving coverage and quality of vital statistics
- Research and training in population and development through development of research agenda in RH, population and gender and addressing emerging population issues and population dynamics and their linkages with sustainable development
- Evidence-based advocacy for legislation that protects against gender-based violence

These interventions are implemented at the national levels with a few pilots in selected geographical areas. The responsibility of implementing the programme rests with a number of Government institutions and Civil Society, such as the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Statistical Centre of Iran, Civil Registration Organization, Tehran University and Shiraz University and the Organization on Defending Victims of Violence. In addition, UNFPA has succeeded to establish collaboration with the Parliament of the I.R. of Iran in the area of Population and Development. Upon establishment of the Population and Development Committee in the Parliament, both sides plan to focus their collaboration on addressing the changing population issues in Iran.

UNFPA attaches priority to documenting Iran's experience in the population field and promoting sharing of knowledge between Iran and other countries through south/south cooperation modalities including regional networks.