



UNFPA FNUAP

United Nations Fonds des Nations Unies
Population Fund pour la population

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

in Johannesburg, William A. Ryan
Mobile : 082-858-1897
(or +27-82-858-1897)
ryanw@unfpa.org

in New York, Kristin Hetle
Tel. +1 212-297-5020
hetle@unfpa.org

Development Summit Reaffirms Global Commitment to Women's Health and Rights

Johannesburg, 4 September 2002—The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) today welcomed world leaders' reaffirmation of goals linking poverty eradication and environmental protection to health, including reproductive health, and women's empowerment.

At its conclusion today, the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) adopted a ten-chapter Plan of Implementation, detailing actions needed to fight poverty and protect the environment. Some 104 heads of state and government took part, along with 9,000 delegates, 8,000 nongovernmental organization representatives and 4,000 members of the press.

Emphasizing that "eradicating poverty is the greatest challenge facing the world today", the action plan endorses the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals for addressing poverty. It supports actions, among others, to promote equality for women; eliminate violence and discrimination against them; and improve their status, health and economic welfare through equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health care services.

The chapter on health calls for strengthening countries' capacity to deliver basic services for all and promote healthy lives, including reproductive and sexual health. It upholds the commitments made at recent United Nations meetings including the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its review in 1999.

The plan reaffirms the targets for reversing the AIDS pandemic set at last year's General Assembly special session, in particular a 25 per cent reduction of HIV prevalence in young men and women aged 15-24 in the most-affected countries by 2005, and globally by 2010. It urges implementation of national prevention and treatment strategies and increased international cooperation against AIDS, and calls on countries to meet agreed commitments to support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, while promoting access to the Fund by the neediest countries.

"We are gratified that the summit recognized women's rights to be an important aspect of sustainable development," UNFPA's Executive Director Thoraya Obaid said in New York. This will boost the global effort to promote gender equality and universal access to reproductive health care."

Health service delivery, the plan states, should be “in conformity with human rights and fundamental freedoms” and consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values. The human rights reference was included after behind-the-scenes negotiations in the final hours of the 10-day conference.

(more)

UNFPA press release/2

This was widely understood as a reaffirmation of international consensus agreements, notably the ICPD’s endorsement of the right to reproductive and sexual health, encompassing access to family planning information and services, safe motherhood, prevention of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, and elimination of sexual coercion and violence.

In a 30 August statement to the summit plenary, delivered by Deputy Executive Director Kunio Waki, Ms. Obaid noted that progress towards these goals is indispensable to meeting the WSSD’s environmental and poverty reduction goals.

UNFPA is the world's largest multilateral source of population assistance, with programmes in 142 countries. Since it became operational in 1969, the Fund has provided some \$5.6 billion to developing countries to meet reproductive health needs and support sustainable development.

For more information: www.unfpa.org.