



Challenges, Opportunities and Action in a World of 7 Billion

World Population Day kicks off global *7 Billion Actions* campaign

UNITED NATIONS, New York, 11 July 2011 — As the world population approaches 7 billion, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, launches a global initiative today to highlight the challenges, opportunities and actions that will shape our common future.

World Population Day, 11 July, is the start of a worldwide advocacy effort that will continue through 31 October, when the United Nations projects world population will surpass 7 billion, and beyond. The *7 Billion Actions* campaign will promote dialogue on what it means to live in a world with so many people and encourage action on issues that affect us all.

UNFPA offices and their partners throughout the world will organize a variety of related activities.

A world of 7 billion is a challenge

Globally, population has doubled since 1968 and grown by almost 40 per cent since reaching 5 billion in 1987, an event that led to the first World Population Day. Growth will continue at least until mid-century despite dramatic declines in the average number of children per woman, according to the UN Population Division.

Nearly all of this population growth—97 of every 100 people—is occurring in less developed countries, some of which already struggle to meet their citizens' needs. Gaps between rich and poor are growing. And more people than ever are vulnerable to food insecurity, water shortages and weather-related disasters. Meanwhile, many rich and middle-income countries are concerned about low fertility, declining populations and ageing.

Whether we can live together on a healthy planet will depend on the decisions we make now. The date we reach the next billion—and the ones after that—depends on policy and funding decisions made now about maternal and child health care, access to voluntary family planning, girls' education, and expanded opportunities for women, said UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin.

It is also an opportunity

These pressing human concerns are the transnational issues that call for concerted actions, Dr. Osotimehin added. "As more and more people share our planet, new challenges will arise. Solving existing challenges while protecting the human rights of all will become increasingly more urgent."

Individual decisions determine global population growth. However, some 215 million women in developing countries lack access to effective family planning. Working to ensure that every child is wanted and every childbirth is safe will lead to smaller and stronger families and more opportunities for women.

People under 25 make up 43 per cent of the world's population, but the percentage reaches 60 per cent in the least-developed countries. When young people can claim their right to health, education and decent working conditions, they become a powerful force for economic development and positive change.

"We have an opportunity and responsibility to invest in adolescents and youth," Dr. Osotimehin said. "With the right policies, investments and social support, young people can enjoy healthier lives free of poverty and enhance prospects for peace and stability."

The 7 Billion Actions campaign is a call to action

The *7 Billion Actions* campaign—a collaborative effort involving National Geographic, IBM and SAP, as well as many other private sector and UN partners and civil society organizations—calls on people to get involved. It uses new partnerships, technologies and social marketing to spur commitment and action. Individuals, organizations and communities can participate in a variety of ways, from telling their unique stories to carrying out specific actions.

“Working together, incremental actions will create exponential results,” Dr. Osotimehin said. “UNFPA’s slogan is that everyone counts. And now, with nearly 7 billion people sharing our planet, we need to count on each other as never before.”

To learn more about the global *7 Billion Actions* campaign, visit www.7billionactions.org.

To learn more about World Population Day, visit www.unfpa.org/public/world-population-day

For more information, contact:

Abubakar Dungus

Tel: +1 212 297 5031

Email: dungus@unfpa.org

Maria Fernandez Ruiz de Larrinaga

Tel:+1 212-297 4957

Email: larrinaga@unfpa.org

#

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, 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, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA - because everyone counts

#

#

#