



UNFPA Mission Statement

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 young people is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA – because everyone counts

CONTRACEPTIVES SAVE WOMEN'S LIVES

Every minute, somewhere in the world, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth, and 20 more suffer disabilities related to childbearing. This leads to 536,000 women who die from pregnancy-related causes annually (99% are in developing countries) and another 10 million women who suffer injury or disability, such as infection, infertility, depression and obstetric fistulae. When women suffer and die, children also suffer and die. Globally, every year more than 1 million children are left motherless. Children who have lost their mothers are up to 10 times more likely to die prematurely than those who haven't.

One in three of all deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth could be avoided if women who wanted effective contraception had access to it. Family planning can prevent the serious health consequences (anaemia, membrane rupture, low-birth weight, preterm delivery) of becoming pregnant within six months of an abortion. Prompt use of contraception after childbirth can help lengthen the interval between births, benefiting the health of both mother and children.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

- In Viet Nam, 5-7 women die due to pregnancy or childbirth every day.
- There are about 500,000 abortions in Viet Nam every year. This equals one abortion for two live births on average. Adolescent abortions account for one third of the total.
- In Viet Nam, the national contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) rate is 79%, with 68.2% of couples using modern methods (GSO, 2007). The IUD is by far the most common method of contraception, accounting for more than 50% of all contraceptive use, with condoms accounting for only about 10% and male sterilization only 0.4% (MOH, 2006).

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- It is estimated that by 2015 US\$ 6 billion in additional funding will be needed from domestic and international sources to achieve 'Millennium Development Goal 5: improve maternal health'. It is also estimated that, in order to achieve MDG 5, each country will need to invest about 15% of its national budget in health (UNFPA 2008).
- Preventing maternal deaths and ensuring access to voluntary family planning services requires political and financial commitment

from the Government of Viet Nam, strong support from international organizations, civil societies and the media, and the participation of men as well as women.

- It is necessary to ensure accessibility (for both married and non-married people) to information and counselling on sexual and reproductive health, and on the right to effective contraception for both men and women.
- Prenatal care, including information on breast-feeding, immunization, nutrition and family planning services must be provided.
- Provision of basic and emergency obstetric care before, during and following childbirth is needed. Special attention must be paid to poor, remote areas and/or to areas where the health systems are weak.

KEY MESSAGES

1. No woman should die giving life.
2. By helping women avoid unwanted and poorly timed pregnancies, family planning can save millions of infants' and children's lives each year, prevent one fourth to one third of all maternal deaths, and also help to slow rates of population growth.
3. Ensuring access to family planning, skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care requires a strong and well-functioning health system benefiting all.

WHAT IS UNFPA DOING?

In Viet Nam, UNFPA supports the Ministry of Health to develop and implement the National Safe Motherhood Master Plan. It also assists the Government of Viet Nam to strengthen the skilled birth attendant network through pre-service and refresher training. UNFPA also helps to pilot safe motherhood interventions in selected ethnic minority regions in order to identify lessons learned and best practices for the Government of Viet Nam to scale up and to adjust public health care policies.

LINKS

UNFPA: No woman should die giving life
<http://www.unfpa.org/safemotherhood>

Family planning: so that every pregnancy is wanted
<http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning.htm>

Main sources for this fact sheet: The Lancet's Maternal Survival and Women Deliver Series (2006/2007); the 2005 World Health Report; and Meeting the Need, 2006, by UNFPA and Path; UNFPA in Viet Nam responses to maternal and neonatal health in Viet Nam – Publications No.4 (UNFPA 2007)