



FACTSheet

Why the United States Should Restore Funding for UNFPA

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provides international leadership on population issues and is a key source of financial assistance for family planning and reproductive health programs in poor countries. Restoring U.S. funding for UNFPA programs is crucial to improving the health and lives of women and their families and to addressing demographic trends and promoting sustainable development.

A Global Leader

- **The United Nations Population Fund is the principal United Nations (UN) organization in the family planning field.** UNFPA has helped many countries to adopt national population policies and initiate and strengthen their voluntary family planning programs. It has also become an important advocate for improving the status of women.
- **UNFPA provides global leadership on population issues.** As a UN organization, UNFPA is a politically neutral source of funds and advice. The UN has a worldwide presence and is a stable source of long-term assistance to developing countries. In contrast, donor country aid programs often respond to short-term political interests. UNFPA organized the landmark 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and monitors the ongoing implementation of the conference's *Programme of Action*. UNFPA also plays an active role in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
- **UNFPA is an important channel for donor country contributions to population programs.** UNFPA funds come from voluntary contributions made by countries in addition to their assessed UN dues. A record-breaking 181 countries, including many in the developing world, contributed to UNFPA in 2007. However, a few wealthy countries provide most of UNFPA's funds, and some donor countries channel almost all their population assistance through UNFPA. The Netherlands, Sweden,

Norway, the U.K., and Japan are UNFPA's five largest donors.

- **UNFPA provides substantial financial assistance.** In 2006, UNFPA spent \$246 million on projects in 154 countries, compared to \$234 million in 2005.
- **UNFPA provides population assistance to more countries than any other donor agency.** In comparison, only about 50 countries currently receive U.S. population assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development. UNFPA has played a key role in countries where few other donors provide population assistance; for example, Vietnam and a number of small African countries.

Support for Voluntary Family Planning

- **UNFPA is committed to freedom of individual choice in family planning.** UNFPA's assistance is grounded in the principle that "all couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have access to the information, education and means to do so." UNFPA does not support abortion services but recognizes unsafe abortion as a major health problem. It seeks to reduce abortions and related deaths by improving access to contraception and to treatment for complications of unsafe abortion.
- **The bulk of UNFPA assistance supports reproductive health programs including family planning services.** UNFPA's priorities include preventing pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, promoting safe pregnancy and delivery, and expanding access to reproductive health care for the poor and other hard to reach groups. UNFPA supports data collection and research to encourage appropriate population and development policies, activities to improve the status of women, and advocacy to galvanize political and financial backing for reproductive health care and development. UNFPA also plays an important leadership role in global efforts to prevent and repair obstetric fistula, to eradicate female genital mutilation, and to improve access to reproductive health supplies, including contraceptives and condoms.

U.S. Support Inconsistent

- **The United States helped establish the Fund in 1969 and has played a leadership role in UNFPA.** With its substantial expertise in the population field,



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the United States has been an active participant on the Executive Board, made up of 36 UN member states, which provides oversight for UNFPA. Until 1985, the United States was the largest donor, providing nearly one-third of total annual funding for UNFPA.

■ **In recent years, however, the United States has been an unreliable source of financial support.** Between 1986 and 1992, the U.S. Administration withheld all contributions to UNFPA approved by the Congress in response to reports of human rights abuses in the Chinese population program, which UNFPA assisted since 1979. In 1993, President Clinton restored U.S. funding to UNFPA on the condition that no U.S. funds be used by UNFPA in China until 1999, when Congress banned any contribution due to concerns about a new UNFPA program in China. For 2000 and 2001, Congress allocated \$25 million, but required that the contribution be reduced by any amount UNFPA spends in China.

■ **For fiscal year 2002, Congress earmarked \$34 million for UNFPA.** However, in July 2002, the Bush administration withheld the entire contribution. In doing so, it ignored the recommendation that UNFPA be funded from the State Department's own investigating team, which had been sent to evaluate UNFPA's assistance to China. Although Congress has appropriated funds for a U.S. contribution in each year, President Bush has broadly interpreted a legislative restriction (the so-called Kemp-Kasten amendment) to deny funding to UNFPA for the last six fiscal years. The amount of funds withheld from UNFPA since 2002 totals in excess of \$200 million.

■ **Inconsistent U.S. funding has undermined UNFPA's program.** A significant U.S. contribution remains essential if UNFPA is to help meet the growing need for family planning and reproductive health care in developing countries, especially as the U.S. provides population assistance to a smaller number of countries. Efforts by family planning opponents to deny U.S. funding for UNFPA penalize poor countries in need of UNFPA's assistance.

UNFPA and China

■ **There are important reasons why UNFPA should work in China.** Roughly 20 percent of the world's women live in China. UNFPA is a source of contact with international experts who can recommend alternative and voluntary ap-

proaches to China's compulsory family planning program. Since 1998, UNFPA's Executive Board has approved a series of five-year country programs in China that have promoted voluntary use of family planning and allowed couples to freely choose the size of their families. The emphasis on voluntarism represents an important breakthrough.

■ **UNFPA's relatively modest assistance—only about \$3.5 million annually—focuses on improving family planning services in China and is in no way connected to human rights abuses.** In the past, UNFPA helped upgrade the quality of contraceptive supplies, reducing contraceptive failures and resulting abortions. It also strengthened other maternal and child health services. Beginning in 1998, all birth quotas were lifted as a condition of assistance in the 32 model counties that UNFPA was to operate, replacing compulsory birth control with good counseling and informed consent, a greater range of contraceptive method choices, and higher quality services. UNFPA's direct assistance was subsequently expanded to an additional 30 counties. In addition, the U.S. State Department's 2004 human rights report noted that "800 other counties also removed the target and quota system and tried to replicate the UNFPA supported-project model," potentially reaching 400 million people across China. The program also supports activities to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, to improve understanding of population ageing issues and to enhance the status of women. Many members of UNFPA's Executive Board see the UNFPA program as a positive force with the potential to improve China's national population policy.

The U.S. Must Support UNFPA

■ **The U.S. needs to restore funding for UNFPA.** The world looks to the United States for leadership in addressing global problems. Opinion polls show substantial support for the UN among Americans, especially in improving health, stabilizing population and conserving the environment. UNFPA remains the only intergovernmental institution with a mandate to address the unmet reproductive health needs of men and women worldwide as well as the crucial challenge of population growth. The United States should be a full partner in supporting UNFPA's efforts.



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