


[Go to menu](#) | [Go to text](#) Welcome to the United Nations. It's your world.[General Assembly](#) [Site Map](#)

PRESIDENT OF THE 64TH SESSION UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[Home](#)[Main Issues](#)[Statements](#)[Letters](#)[Newsroom](#)[Cabinet](#)[Press Kit](#)

At the Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development

New York, 12 October 2009

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development is an important opportunity to mark the progress that has been made over the years and the challenges that remain to fulfill the objectives set out in Cairo.

The Cairo Conference was part of the series of development conferences held by the United Nations in the 1990s. As you may recall, those conferences covered a wide range of themes – from protecting the environment to promoting human rights, from social development to human settlements to advancing the status of women.

All of these conferences contributed to the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals that provide a unifying framework for international development. They set an international agenda based on common goals, which continues to guide our efforts today.

In fact we are talking about a process that goes back at least 40 years, when UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund was created. During the past four decades, we have learned that every society's hopes and prospects for peace, prosperity and social and economic development are closely tied to its demography. It is evident that if States are to provide adequately for their citizens, they need to incorporate population analysis and policies into their development strategies.

We also understand better that there is a limit to the pressures our global environment can take. It is clear from the crisis of climate change that we must tackle unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Rising carbon emissions, deforestation and water shortages point to the need to bring people and the environment into greater balance and harmony. Urgent and collective action is required to protect the natural resources on which all life depends. We also need to ensure that the benefits of globalization are equally shared by all. And we have to urgently cope with the wide-ranging consequences of the world financial and economic crisis, especially its impact on global poverty which is on the rise and the development objectives which have been set back.

Excellencies,

The consensus reached in Cairo 15 years ago continues to guide the way forward on the interlinked issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development. It contains recommendations related to child survival, women's health and safe motherhood. It makes a strong case for reproductive health and rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Better understanding of these issues has brought real change in the daily life of millions of women, men and young people. They now have wider choices and can make informed decisions on fundamental aspects of their lives.

Today, more girls are going to school. More infants are surviving. More people are living free of HIV and AIDS. All this is good news, for which every nation in the world can take some credit. This progress has been achieved by enhancing knowledge and individual opportunity and by broadening choices. We should continue this spirit of international consensus and cooperation. I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Population Fund, which has supported countries in carrying the Cairo agreement forward. I would also like to pay tribute to the civil society for their contribution in this collective effort.

As we look ahead, we must ensure that the vision and goals of Cairo are an integral part of the 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 10-year review of the MDGs next year in the General Assembly.

At the end, the overarching goal is to create greater balance between population and development and to improve the lives of our current and future generations.

Today let us renew and strengthen our commitment to the vision and holistic nature of the Cairo agreement. Let us also commit ourselves to stronger action to implement in full the ICPD Programme of Action.

Thank you.

[Back to top](#)