



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Population issues, gender must figure high in sustainable development talks – UN



A young mother and child

16 December 2010 – The United Nations Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) is stepping up its efforts to ensure that gender, reproductive health and other population dynamics figure high on the agendas of upcoming global environmental and sustainable development discussions.

Agency officials met with representatives from 20 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on Wednesday to build partnerships to advocate for the inclusion of these issues, with a special focus on the agenda of the “Rio+20” conference in 2012, a 20-year follow-up to the 1992 “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro.

The objectives of Rio+20 are: to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development; to assess progress towards internationally agreed goals on sustainable development and to address new and emerging challenges. It will also focus on two specific themes: a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, and an institutional framework for sustainable development.

“As the world prepares to extend and expand the principles and pillars of sustainable development, it is essential that UNFPA bring its core mandate issues to bear on a new agreement,” the Executive Director of UNFPA, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, said.

[Announcing](#) that the Fund will launch an initiative at Rio+20 to apply gender, reproductive health and population dynamics to sustainable development – by harnessing data from 2010 censuses together with other population data – she added that national-level capacity building for data analysis and use in policy-making will be at the centre of agency efforts.

Taking these dynamics into account “will help to focus the sustainable development agenda on planning for the composition, distribution and movement of the population in the long term, which in turn shape areas vital to the green economy, such as food security, employment and occupational structure, health, social protection, agricultural production and environmental vulnerability,” Ms. Obaid said.

Rio+20 will aim to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, to assess progress towards internationally agreed goals on sustainable development, and to address new and emerging challenges. The Summit will also focus on two specific themes: a new “green economy” and its relationship to poverty eradication and sustainable development, and an institutional framework for sustainable development.

In the area of climate change, UNFPA in 2008 brought together a group of NGOs specializing in sexual and reproductive health that agreed on the importance of linking population issues to the global environmental debate.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN agency urges Group of Eight nations to address population issues](#)