

Press Release



United Nations Population Fund
Office for the Pacific

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/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

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UNFPA donates supply of contraceptives including condoms to Ministry of Health

SUVA, FIJI, (2 August) – This afternoon, the Minister for Primary and Preventive Health Services, Honorable Udit Narayan, received supplies of contraceptives including condoms from the Representative and CST Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Office for the Pacific, Mr. Najib Assifi. The donation not only supplements current supplies, but will further strengthen the Health Ministry's efforts to provide family planning services in Fiji.



Minister for Primary and Preventive Health Services, Honorable Udit Narayan, (left) and Mr. Najib Assifi, UNFPA Representative and CST Director at the handover ceremony (right).

Without access to contraceptives, couples find themselves with children too soon, or more than they desired, or more than they can cope with. Without access to condoms, women and men are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, as well as unplanned pregnancies.

At the regional level, Fiji is the only country in the Pacific that has a dedicated budget for the procurement of contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities. However, since this year the demand for contraceptives exceeded supply. UNFPA

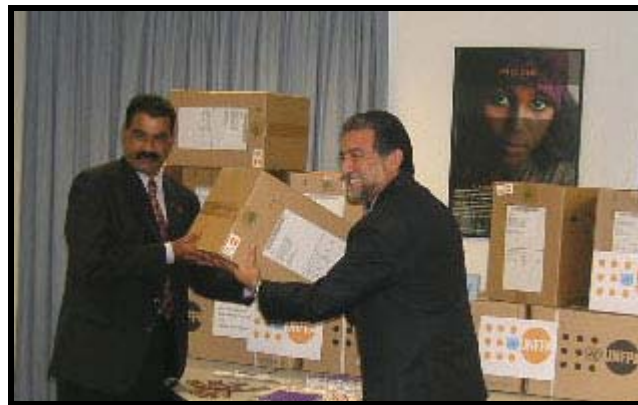
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agreed to provide the required commodities to meet the shortfall. Failing to meet the demand will result in unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, maternal and infant mortality and diminished economic growth.

Currently the contraceptive prevalence rate in Fiji is estimated to be 45.9%. It is encouraging to see that Fiji is progressing to achieve the threshold target of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action which is 55% by 2015. However, unmet need for contraceptives is an area that needs to be strengthened. Previously, about 20% of women of reproductive age in Fiji, desired to have contraceptives but were unable to access them. However, a recent survey suggested that unmet need is on the rise. To meet the ICPD Contraceptive Prevalence Rate target of 55% by 2015, concerted effort is required to address unmet need for contraceptives. The donation of contraceptives by UNFPA will be used to address the current shortfall.



Mr. Najib Assifi, UNFPA Representative and CST Director hands over contraceptives to the Minister for Primary and Preventive Health Services, Honorable Udit Narayan.

At the recent Fiji National STI/HIV Strategic Plan 2007-2011 workshop, the Ministry of Health expressed its concern that Fijian males between 20 and 49 years of age are particularly at risk of contracting the HIV virus. The supply of condoms will support the Ministry in current efforts to prevent the further spread of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS in Fiji.

UNFPA will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Health to support access to reproductive health care. Ensuring reliable supplies is a prerequisite to achieving this goal. Without a dependable supply of contraceptives and other essential reproductive health commodities, individuals are not able to fully exercise their right to reproductive health.

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