



**Launch of the WHO report
"Women and health: today's evidence tomorrow's agenda"
9 November 2009, Geneva, Switzerland**

**Statement by Alanna Armitage, Director, UNFPA Office in Geneva
United Nations Population Fund**

UNFPA welcomes the new Report by the World Health Organization on *Women and Health: Today's Evidence, Tomorrow's Agenda*, a landmark publication which highlights the consequences and costs of failing to address women's health issues.

This year, we commemorate the 15th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) when 179 governments explicitly recognized women's health, including sexual and reproductive health as a human right. Since then, great progress has been made, but as the WHO Report points out, we still face many challenges to ensure that health systems work for women.

Reproductive health and rights and women's empowerment are at the core of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those targets related to promoting gender equality, improving maternal health, and preventing HIV. Access to reproductive health helps women and girls avoid unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion. It also helps prevent maternal death and disability, and prevent HIV and AIDS, now the leading causes of death among women of reproductive age.

From UNFPA's perspective, this milestone report will galvanize greater investment in sexual and reproductive health. This investment will allow women to stay healthier, be more productive, and have more opportunities for education, training and employment. This, in turn, benefits entire families, communities and nations.

UNFPA has already joined forces with WHO, the World Bank and UNICEF to improve the health and lives of girls and women around the world.

Together, we will continue to shine a spotlight on the health needs of women and girls, and their right to be treated with dignity and respect.

**WOMEN
AND
HEALTH**