

WORLD POPULATION DAY • 11 JULY 2008 PLAN YOUR FUTURE, PLAN YOUR FAMILIES

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

World Population Day was inspired by the public's interest in Five Billion Day on 11 July 1987, approximately the date on which the world reached five billion people.

Two years later, in 1987, World Population Day was formally established by the United Nations Development Program Governing Council to raise awareness of global population issues.

THE WORLD POPULATION & YOUNG PEOPLE

The world population on the 20th anniversary of Five Billion Day, 11 July 2007, was estimated to have been 6,727,551,263.

Of this population, more than 1.5 billion were children and young people between the ages of 10 and 25, the largest ever generation of adolescents.

The world for children and young people today however is still fraught with challenges. More than 50 per cent of them continue to live in poverty, on less than \$2 per day. Many also face social inequality, poor schools, gender discrimination, unemployment and inadequate health systems.

Additionally, globalisation, the AIDS pandemic, electronic communications and a changing climate have irrevocably shifted the landscape, giving rise to new threats.

THEME 2008

In 1968, world leaders proclaimed that individuals have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and timing of their children. Forty years later, modern contraception remains out of reach for hundreds of millions of women, men and young people.

This year's World Population Day reaffirms the right of people to plan their families. It encourages activities, events and information that will help make this right real – especially for those who often have the hardest time getting the information and services they need to plan their families, such as young people.

Through advocacy, it is hoped that new energy will galvanise actions to promote health for young people, including giving them access to sexual and reproductive health information and education. When young people are empowered with skills to achieve their dreams, think critically, and express themselves freely, a new global culture will emerge, one that will protect our young as well as the planet we live in.

Our children and young people deserve a future, and a life. Investing in them is an investment in the future leaders of families, communities and nations.