



# PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL CALLS FOR ADEQUATE HEALTHCARE  
TO LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES BY 2015**

**ENSURE WIDE RANGE OF FAMILY PLANNING METHODS AS SOLUTION TO  
GROWING POPULATION PROBLEM**

**United Nations , 4 April 2005:** At the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development to discuss issues of growing population and healthcare, the Chief of Policy Development and Coordination in the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Om Pradhan called for the need for appropriate healthcare and availability of family planning methods in the Least Developed Countries no later than 2015, as part of the solution to the problem of population growth.

“Population in Least Developed Countries is projected to more than double from 800 million to 1.7 billion by 2045, with the population tripling in 11 of them. Though the high fertility rates in the Least Developed Countries are expected to decline, they will remain higher than the rest of the world,” he said at the United Nations today.

The population dynamics in the Least Developed Countries will also undergo changes due to an increase in life expectancy from 50 to 66 years. At the same time its relation to economic productivity will depend on the implementation of effective programmes to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other debilitating diseases.

**PAGE 2**

“In Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, the population is projected to decrease as deaths outnumber births,” he added.

Mr. Pradhan said that by 2050, the Least Developed Countries will have a large youth population. “This can be a highly productive resource provided the Least Developed Countries can contain HIV/AIDS, provide health and welfare facilities, education and training with employment opportunities.”

Mr. Pradhan lamented the fact that an increase in population, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and bleak economic prospects make it increasingly difficult for the Least Developed Countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and the goals and targets set out in the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. “The Brussels Programme of Action has its basis in the Millennium Development Goals, but increases its development focus to deal with the special circumstances of the Least Developed Countries,” he explained.

The Least Developed Countries have agreed to strengthen basic healthcare systems and increase access to a wide range of quality healthcare. They have agreed to promote reproductive rights, with an emphasis on maternal and child health.

Appealing for strong support for the Least Developed Countries from the international community, Mr. Pradhan said, “Least Developed Countries face severe capacity constraints, lack technology and know-how and the financial means to effectively undertake these commitments. It implies that they require strong support from the international community.”

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