



PRESS RELEASE



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

**UN Envoy for Least Developed Countries says global partnerships key to addressing
population growth in poor nations**

New York: 7 December 2006: The world's 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have the highest population growth rate; fertility rate and highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, yet they have the poorest quality and quantity of health services, said UN envoy for LDCs Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury on Wednesday.

The UN Under-Secretary-General made the remarks at the Global Media Awards sponsored by the Washington-based Population Institute. The awards serve to encourage editors, news directors and journalists to acquire a more in-depth knowledge of population issues and to stimulate high standards of journalism.

Mr. Chowdhury highlighted that the LDCs are expected to absorb a quarter of the world's increase in population between now and 2015, the final year for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

During the next 40 years, the LDCs population is projected to grow at a much faster rate than that of the rest of the world. In general, high fertility rates show no sign of tapering off in LDCs, said Chowdhury.

“One of the major reasons these negative trends is the lack of family planning services. The policy implication of this is the need for increased reproductive health services and empowerment of women that would help reduce the high fertility rates, maternal and child mortality,” High Representative Chowdhury said.

He further said targeted investments in the women’s education, reproductive health, economic opportunity and political rights can spur growth and sustainable development for generations to come.

The UN Envoy called on the international community to support the efforts of the LDCs to control population growth. “I believe that in addition to the reasons of solidarity, it is in the interest of the developed and the more well-off developing countries to support the poorest in tackling population challenges. The manifestations of population problems affect us all in one way or another, regardless of the countries in which we live,” said Mr. Chowdhury.

Additionally, civil society was singled out by the High Representative for their role in keeping population and development issues high on the global agenda.

“Because of its proximity to the people, civil society is particularly well placed to play a major role in addressing population challenges. The multiplicity, diversity and relative independence of action also allow civil society organisations to tackle the difficult issues which public officials and other development actors may avoid. This unique strength of civil society needs to be recognised and harnessed to move the population agenda ahead,” said Under Secretary General Chowdhury.

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