

## **Strengthening U.S. Leadership on Reproductive Health and Family Planning**

The United Nations Foundation (UN Foundation) is leading a new initiative to strengthen the U.S.'s leadership role in international reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP).

This initiative will seek to support the goals set forth by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by re-engaging the U.S. and motivating the broader international community to expand its efforts to reach MDG 5's target of universal access to reproductive health. As ICPD envisioned, the project aims for the U.S. to be a leading global voice and funder supporting women and couples worldwide to decide the number, spacing and timing of their children, and for them to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. By improving access to voluntary RH/FP, the U.S. will contribute to achieving women's equality and empowerment, as well as to population stabilization, increased economic growth, enhanced political security, and protection of the environment.

More specifically, this initiative aims to strengthen U.S. engagement both bilaterally and multilaterally, in ways that are sustainable. Strengthened U.S. leadership would feature increased financial support for RH/FP (at least \$1 billion annual appropriation), improved U.S. policies on RH/FP, and clear stories of better outcomes from funding and policy impact on the ground.

This initiative is a collaborative effort of the UN Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Summit Foundation, and the Wallace Global Fund.

### **The UN Foundation's Role**

Acting as a bridge between the foundation and NGO communities, the UN Foundation is undertaking several key roles: 1) Conducting strategic grant-making to U.S. NGOs for advocacy activities to strengthen U.S. leadership on RH/FP; 2) Creating a new evidence-based research report; 3) Laying the groundwork for long-term public support; 4) Conducting advocacy working jointly with other foundations in a coordinated effort; and 5) Connecting the U.S. with the United Nations on RH/FP.

The UN Foundation is utilizing its institutional capacity and senior staff experience, as well as those of its foundation partners and select independent experts, to strategically and synergistically deploy resources to enhance the existing advocacy capacity of key NGOs, with particular attention to their comparative advantages and long-term organizational priorities.

#### **➤ Conducting strategic grant-making**

The UN Foundation will undertake strategic grant-making to U.S. NGOs for activities in support of achieving the initiative's goals in terms of strengthening US leadership on RH/FP. The initiative will expand the existing capacity of U.S. NGOs and will lay the groundwork for longer term advocacy and communications efforts.

The project grant-making will support a wide range of tactics and will seek to support collaboration and bring new groups and voices to the table – including those outside of Washington, D.C. and efforts that highlight Global South voices. Tactics will include, but are not limited to: (1) Educating the Administration and Congress, (2) Engaging media, (3) Engaging grassroots and opinion-makers; (4) Engaging new voices.

➤ **Creating a new evidence-based communications resource**

An additional component of the initiative will be a new policy and communications “making the case” resource built around a detailed, carefully conducted study commissioned by the UN Foundation and released by a well-recognized research institution. The study will analyze the linkages between reproductive health, gender equality, security, and the world’s most critical long-term issues to create a meta-analysis that will make the case that the U.S. should reclaim its leadership in support for RH/FP. It will be a resource for U.S. NGOs, funders, decision-, policy- and opinion- makers, and others who want credible, cutting-edge arguments in favor of increased RH/FP assistance.

➤ **Laying the groundwork for long-term public support**

To draw broad public support for the urgent need for increased resources for RH/FP, the UN Foundation will study the feasibility of designing and executing a signature campaign around fostering U.S. public engagement and grassroots support for meeting the goal of universal access to reproductive health, particularly addressing unmet need for family planning.

The feasibility study will test approaches to best engage the public, concepts, messages, framing and positioning, target audiences, and related issues prior to determining whether and how to proceed. The fundamental issue for the feasibility study will be to determine if there is a strategy to frame access to RH/FP in a creative and engaging way that will demonstrate and further build public support, particularly among the younger generations.

➤ **Collaborating with other foundations on joint advocacy**

The UN Foundation will work with other foundations to jointly advocate for U.S. leadership on RH/FP. Specifically, the UN Foundation will attempt to collaborate with other foundations where appropriate to leverage the foundations’ voices in the public debate on RH/FP.

➤ **Connecting the U.S. with the United Nations on RH/FP**

The UN Foundation also will utilize its capacity to expand the connections between U.S. policy and key United Nations agreements related to RH/FP. Specifically, the UN Foundation plans to work with the U.S. government and policymakers to more fully embrace the ICPD framework and honor its commitments to the MDGs.

**About the UN Foundation and Its Women and Population Program**

*The UN Foundation, a public charity, was created in 1998 with entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner’s historic \$1 billion gift to support UN causes and activities. The UN Foundation is an advocate for the UN and a platform for connecting people, ideas, and capital to help the United Nations solve global problems. We build partnerships, grow constituencies, mobilize resources and advocate policy changes to support the UN’s work for individual and global progress. The UN Foundation’s work - focused on select global problems - is decreasing child mortality, improving disaster relief, protecting diverse cultures and environments, creating a clean energy future, empowering women and girls, and improving U.S.-UN relations. For more information, visit [www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org).*

*The UN Foundation’s **Women and Population program** works together with the UN and other partners to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, with particular focus on reproductive and sexual health and rights.*