

MESSAGE

FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present Delivering on Promises, the 2024 Annual Report of UNFPA's Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, which highlights our shared achievements in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights across the region, even amid an increasingly complex global landscape.

In a year shaped by humanitarian crises, climate emergencies and demographic shifts, women, girls and young people remained at the heart of our efforts. Their resilience and leadership drove progress in places often overlooked, where our support was needed most.



In 2024, the UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office responded to 47 humanitarian emergencies across 16 countries in the region, ensuring millions of women and girls continued to have access to lifesaving care. Our midwifery and supply chain innovations helped avert thousands of maternal deaths.

As the Regional Office, we also scaled up comprehensive support for survivors of gender-based violence and strengthened regional platforms across Asia and the Pacific to prevent violence against women and girls.

Last year also marked the 30th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. At the Global Dialogue in Dhaka, we reaffirmed our commitment to rights, choices and dignity for all in the context of ageing populations, climate change and forced displacement. These defining issues for the future of our region demand bold, forward-looking solutions.

As this annual report shows, the Regional Office broke new ground in disability inclusion, financing and partnerships with women-led organizations, helping shape a more equitable development agenda. These achievements were made possible through the dedication of our staff, the collaboration of our partners and the generous support from our diverse group of donors.

This report presents the direct results of the UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office's strategic and technical guidance to 36 countries, which builds on the programme results delivered through our country offices across the region.

Looking ahead, let us continue to deliver on our promises — so that every woman and girl can live with health, rights and dignity, no matter who she is or where she lives.

Pio Smith
Regional Director
UNFPA, Asia and the Pacific



Pio Smith with students during a life-skills lesson at a village school in North Tarawa, Kiribati (February 2024)

Ensuring rights and choices for all.



OUR PRESENCE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

As the United Nations agency for sexual and reproductive health, UNFPA works toward a future where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person has the opportunity to thrive.



Established in July 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand, the UNFPA <u>Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</u> provides strategic support and expertise to 36 countries, including during humanitarian emergencies.

Our work is guided by three ambitious goals set out in <u>UNFPA's global</u> strategic plan: ending preventable maternal deaths, eliminating unmet need for family planning and eradicating gender-based violence and harmful practices by 2030.

Through the use of data, innovation, and proven solutions, we provide strategic leadership and technical support to 22 country offices and our <u>Pacific Sub-Regional Office</u>. Together, we are helping to build stronger systems, uphold rights, and empower women, girls, and young people throughout the region.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS*

\$12 million

allocated from the UNFPA Supplies Partnership Programme for contraceptives and life-saving maternal health medicines

2 million

women and girls reached in 8 countries with essential reproductive health services

838,000 unintended pregnancies prevented

17,600 maternal deaths averted

256,000

unsafe abortions avoided

5.5 million

people reached on social media, amplifying our voice across the region

\$5.2 million

mobilized in partnerships, advancing reproductive health, gender-based violence prevention, and humanitarian preparedness.

100+

midwives trained from 15 countries, improving maternal and newborn care

47

emergencies responded to in 16 countries, with supplies distributed within 72 hours

60+

youth leaders empowered to influence sexual and reproductive health policy

10

countries developed strategies to prevent gender-based violence

9

countries improved data collection on violence against women, enabling evidence-based policies

*The results presented in this report showcase only the direct contributions of UNFPA's Asia and the Pacific Regional Office achieved by providing strategic and technical guidance to the 36 countries we support across the region.







Every pregnancy should be a journey toward life, not a risk to it. UNFPA is dedicated to ending preventable maternal deaths in Asia and the Pacific by strengthening healthcare systems, training skilled professionals, and ensuring women and adolescent girls have access to the care they deserve.

With unwavering commitment, we are working toward a future where every mother can safely bring life into the world.

Investing in midwives

In 2024, over 100 healthcare practitioners from 15 countries were trained to strengthen <u>midwifery education</u> across the region. As the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, we supported improvements in accreditation standards for midwifery schools and educational institutes. Together with the <u>Burnet Institute</u>, we also developed updated competency-based training packages on respectful maternity care and obstetric violence; disability inclusive care during pregnancy and support for women facing gender-based violence during the perinatal period.

These resources are available to midwifery partners in all 36 countries across the region, helping midwives build skills to address emerging issues and meet the needs of women in their care.

At the country level, the Regional Office supported midwifery education and quality care through faculty development training in Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a new pre-service curriculum in Sri Lanka and revisions to curriculum and scope of practice in Indonesia and Mongolia. These efforts help ensure more women and adolescent girls receive skilled, compassionate care at birth.

Driving accountability through data

Data collection for the 2025 State of the World's Midwifery in Asia-Pacific report — led by UNFPA, in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)— began across 21 countries, providing vital evidence to guide future policy and investments. Meanwhile, eight countries strengthened maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response systems through updated guidelines, improved planning and expanded local efforts.



2 SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Every woman and adolescent girl deserves the right to control her own destiny. UNFPA is committed to ensuring that she has the ability to decide whether, when and with whom to have children, with the right information, services, and support.

Ensuring universal access

With support from the UNFPA Regional Office, shortages of essential reproductive health supplies, including medicines and contraceptives, fell from 35 per cent to less than 10 per cent in Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Pacific, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, ensuring reliable access even in remote areas through strengthened electronic logistics systems. In Nepal, 90 per cent of service points received family planning supplies, supported by real-time tracking to prevent service disruptions.

Maximizing efficiency for lasting impact

In Bangladesh and Pakistan, integrating logistics systems improved forecasting accuracy by

85%

streamlining procurement and reducing commodity wastage.

In Nepal, the Pacific and Sri Lanka, data-driven supply chain improvements reduced expired

75%

commodities, ensuring critical supplies reached women in time.

Assessments carried out in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka strengthened monitoring of UNFPA-donated products across the supply chain, enhancing visibility, risk management, quality and accountability of products within national health systems.



In May 2024, UNFPA—together with the governments of Bangladesh, Bulgaria, and Japan—convened the Global Dialogue on Demographic Diversity in Dhaka. Over 200 experts from governments, academia, civil society, the private sector, and UN agencies explored how demographic shifts—driven by climate change, urbanization, digitalization, and migration—are impacting sustainable development.

The dialogue built on the momentum of the <u>commemoration of the 30th anniversary</u> of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at the <u>fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development</u>, where a political declaration reaffirmed global commitments to the ICPD Programme of Action, and its alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

Delegates examined emerging demographic trends, governance challenges, and the role of data and technology in responding to population changes. Key themes included intersections between climate change and human mobility, building greener, more inclusive cities and the need for forward-looking policies that support intergenerational wellbeing and healthy ageing.

By convening this high-level forum, UNFPA reaffirmed its leadership in driving rights-based, inclusive approaches to demographic change. Outcomes will inform future policy directions, ensuring demographic diversity becomes a force for sustainable development and human rights.

International Conference on Population and Development

In a world grappling with conflicts, record humanitarian displacement, climate change, migration, rising intolerance, and a surge of misinformation and disinformation, it is evidence- and rights-based decisions that will shape the future of reproductive health and rights.

-UNFPA Executive Director, Dr Natalia Kanem

3 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Driving national policy shifts

In 2024, the Regional Office supported 11 countries in strengthening their response to gender-based violence through health sector reforms. In 10 countries, national strategies and programmes were enhanced with technical guidance and capacity building for government and civil society partners. We also conducted technical reviews to align national prevention efforts with global and regional evidence and promising practices.

Turning human rights commitments into action

As the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, we worked with countries across the region to strengthen their commitments to human rights through the <u>Universal Periodic Review</u>. Bhutan, Cambodia, Iran and Malaysia submitted strong recommendations on advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, preventing gender-based violence, and addressing harmful practices, many of which were accepted. In Bangladesh and Cambodia, these commitments are already being translated into national implementation plans aligned with the ICPD agenda, helping to turn global recommendations into tangible change. In the Philippines, UNFPA partnered with the National Human Rights Institution and other key bodies to support advocacy and follow up, reinforcing national accountability to uphold the rights and well-being of women and girls.

Shaping regional priorities

The Asia Regional Symposium on <u>technology-facilitated gender-based</u> <u>violence</u> convened by UNFPA, brought together 40 civil society organizations, digital rights activists, and academic institutions to identify a set of clear regional priorities to advance prevention and protection. Building on this momentum, the <u>ASEAN</u> Regional Consultation engaged 60 representatives from ASEAN bodies and partner organizations to cocreate the first-ever ASEAN-wide communications campaign on online gender-based violence, set to launch in 2025.

To address harmful practices, the UNFPA Regional Office also held a roundtable on female genital mutilation, with over 50 stakeholders from diverse sectors across the region. The discussion resulted in strong consensus to develop a regional accountability framework to accelerate progress toward ending this practice in Asia and the Pacific.

Building regional expertise

The Regional Office supported nine countries in strengthening gender-based violence case management systems, including piloting a resource toolkit to guide localized discussions on how to establish or improve case management, ensuring survivors receive the services they need.

We also convened 19 country offices—from Afghanistan to Viet Nam—for a regional dialogue on shifting social norms to prevent gender-based violence. The exchange strengthened countries' capacity to design evidence-based prevention strategies, followed by tailored support to put learning into action.

Strengthening partnerships for programming

The newly-established Australia-led <u>'Southeast Asia Gender-based Violence Prevention Platform'</u>, co-designed with UNFPA's support, was developed to accelerate social norms change and strengthen technical capacity across Southeast Asia.

Nine country offices, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Indonesia, were supported by the Regional Office to develop and implement programmes to address harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Generating data for action

As data and evidence needs evolve across the region, the <u>kNOwVAWdata initiative</u>, delivered in partnership with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is driving progress in how violence against women is measured. In nine countries, the initiative supported the generation of safe, ethical, and reliable data on the prevalence of violence, giving voice to often-hidden forms of abuse and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking.

To better understand emerging threats, we conducted a qualitative study, <u>Understanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Asia</u>, to inform future action. Capacity was further strengthened through an intensive four-week kNOwVAWdata course, which trained professionals from nine countries to produce and use quality data on violence against women and girls. Online delivery of the course expanded this regional network, supporting more effective prevention and response efforts.

The UNFPA Regional Office also partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia on a <u>regional meta-synthesis of child marriage</u> interventions in South Asia to guide future programming. The findings will inform policies and programmes that are grounded in evidence and focused on protecting and empowering girls.



4 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In 2024, Asia and the Pacific faced unprecedented challenges, with escalating conflicts, political instability and climate-related disasters driving a sharp rise in humanitarian needs. As the world's most disaster-prone region, it requires coordinated and sustained efforts to protect those most at risk, particularly women and girls in fragile settings.

UNFPA remained at the forefront of humanitarian response efforts across the region. By delivering life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, targeted gender-based violence risk mitigation and response initiatives, UNFPA ensured that humanitarian action was not only rapid, but gender-responsive and inclusive. At the heart of this work was an emphasis on resilience and preparedness, ensuring that even in the most complex emergencies, no one is left behind.

Delivering rapid, inclusive support

In 2024, UNFPA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific responded to 47 disasters and crises across 16 countries, providing critical services and supplies to people in need across the region.



The <u>Regional Prepositioning Initiative</u>, supported by the Government of Australia, enabled 35 emergency responses in countries including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu. Thanks to this system, 85 per cent of acute crises received emergency supplies within 72 hours.

Reaching the most vulnerable

To improve access to essential health and protection services, the Regional Office delivered US\$2 million in <u>Cash and Voucher Assistance</u> to 83,500 recipients across 10 countries.



These efforts prioritized women, transgender individuals, and persons with disabilities, ensuring that assistance reached those most often excluded. Gender-based violence coordination mechanisms were strengthened in 18 countries, including dedicated support to Afghanistan and Myanmar. In addition, we provided technical assistance to 16 other countries, helping them integrate global best practices into their emergency response systems.



Supporting long-term crises

In addition to responding to acute emergencies, the Regional Office continues to support protracted crises in Asia and the Pacific, including the Rohingya refugee crisis affecting in particular Myanmar and Bangladesh, as well as the ongoing Afghan refugee situation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. Amid an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, UNFPA's sustained technical support, strategic coordination, and active engagement with public and private partners remain critical to ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of life-saving sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence services for both refugee and host communities.





Strengthening the humanitarian system

In 2024, the Regional Office strengthened the capacity of 25 countries across Asia and the Pacific to integrate sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence programming in emergencies, with a focus on the Minimum Initial Service Package. This included expanding cash voucher assistance, enhancing Accountability to Affected Populations and improving humanitarian supply chain management. These efforts enhanced national preparedness, coordination, and response capacity. In parallel, gender-based violence coordination mechanisms were strengthened in 18 countries through the Regional Emergency Gender-Based Violence Advisor, with dedicated support to Afghanistan and Myanmar.

5 INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

With 56 per cent of the global youth population living in Asia and the Pacific, investing in young people is critical in this region. UNFPA supports adolescents and youth to access comprehensive sexuality education, life skills, and youth-responsive health services, empowering them to make informed decisions and navigate a safe, healthy transition to adulthood.

Expanding education

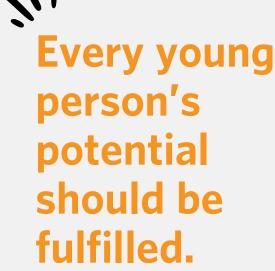
UNFPA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific continued to strengthen comprehensive sexuality education across Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, where improvements to curriculum and teaching approaches equipped young people with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices. We also trained over 30 youth leaders from 15 countries in drama and edutainment for social change, using theater techniques to create powerful advocacy messages on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Youth leadership

At the ICPD30 Global Youth Dialogue in Benin, 30 youth leaders from Asia and the Pacific shaped discussions on sexual and reproductive health and rights, influencing global discourse and driving action in their home countries. Through the ICPD30 SRHR Youth Innovation Challenge, youth-led initiatives in Bhutan, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam tackled issues including sexual and reproductive health and rights, mental health, inclusive education, and reaching marginalized youth, including those with hearing and visual disabilities.

A regional dialogue, co-hosted by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO, brought together Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to advance country action plans for preventing adolescent pregnancy. Maldives, Nepal, and Pakistan also participated in the launch of SAARC's regional framework as part of the Beijing+30 inter-ministerial review process, where stakeholders recommitted to accelerate efforts, uphold rights and combat gender-based violence.





6 POPULATION DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

Understanding demographic shifts—fertility, ageing, migration, and urbanization—is essential for building future-ready policies grounded in human rights. By 2050, the population aged 60 and over in Asia and the Pacific is expected to double, while in several countries, especially in the Pacific Islands, more than half the population is under 25.



UNFPA supports countries to generate and apply population data to drive equitable policies, strengthen resilience and foster inclusive development.

Spotlight on inequality

The 2024 State of World Population Report, <u>Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope</u>, highlighted deep and widening inequalities in sexual and reproductive health across Asia and the Pacific. While adolescent birth rates dropped from 56 to under 24 per 1,000 girls since the year 2000, progress has slowed, and preventable maternal deaths remain high, with more than six women dying every hour in the region. The report called for urgent, inclusive investment to reach those furthest behind, including the 350 million women and girls living with disabilities across the world, who face up to 10 times greater risk of sexual violence.

Strengthening data systems

With support from the UNFPA Regional Office, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka conducted population and housing censuses in 2024, while preparations for national censuses advanced in Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Thailand.

In 2024, Lao People's Democratic Republic also made strides toward its first digital census, using geographic information systems and digital tools to modernize data collection and dissemination.



Several countries have advanced efforts to embed data into national policy systems. <u>Lao People's Democratic Republic</u>, Maldives and Timor-Leste integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights data into health information systems to improve decision-making. Meanwhile, Indonesia, Mongolia and Viet Nam strengthened fertility-related policies by incorporating economic, health, and gender considerations in line with the ICPD agenda.

To support planning around ageing-populations, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Maldives, the Pacific, Pakistan, Mongolia and Viet Nam institutionalized National Transfer Accounts analysis. These efforts supported national discussions on population ageing and guided more informed investments based on demographic trends.





7 FINANCING THE FUTURE

Traditional financing mechanisms are no longer sufficient to meet the growing demands of the ICPD Programme of Action. In response, UNFPA is working across Asia and the Pacific to unlock new sources of funding and promote more sustainable, innovative, and equitable financing.

This includes strengthening domestic resource mobilization, engaging the private sector, and exploring alternative financing models to advance sexual reproductive health, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Leveraging investment

To optimize public budgets and leverage domestic resources, UNFPA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific supported the development of investment cases in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and the Philippines. In 2024, a revision of Indonesia's national maternal health spending estimates, supported by advocacy efforts using the investment case, revealed an increase from \$50 million to \$115 million for 2023 compared to the previous year.

Indonesia's national maternal health spending estimates:

\$50 million



\$115 million

The Regional Office continued to leverage UNFPA's Strategic Investment Facility (SIF) to unlock catalytic investments in reproductive health initiatives. In the Philippines, this resulted in an agreement between UNFPA and the Department of Health, leveraging a catalytic \$500,000 SIF investment to mobilize a larger \$39 million from the Asian Development Bank's Universal Health Coverage Policy Loan. Under a similar SIF arrangement in Indonesia, UNFPA is working with a pool of International Financial Institutions and the Ministry of Health to ensure the inclusion of Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care equipment in a \$615 million primary health care enhancement loan.

UNFPA's Regional Office also supported Malaysia and Indonesia in scaling up Islamic finance mechanisms to support sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence programmes, broadening the sustainable funding options for national partners.

Engaging the private sector

The Regional Office expanded private sector partnerships across Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam. These efforts integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights services into workplace programmes, helping employees access essential care and creating more inclusive, health-supportive work environments. Under this programme, and leveraging UNFPA's Return-on-Investment Tool (ROI-T), we are also developing business cases to demonstrate the economic returns for businesses in investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights services and products in the workplace.



In 2024, a <u>business case</u> was developed in India (Shahi Exports Pvt. Ltd), and six more are under development in Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam. With these partnerships, UNFPA has the potential to reach 500,000 beneficiaries, mostly women, employed by these companies. Complementing these initiatives, the Regional Office has led capacity-building efforts through e-learning courses and executive seminars for country representatives in the region to implement innovative financing strategies and engage with international financial institutions.

8 ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSION



UNFPA is committed to ensuring that sexual reproductive health services are inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, both in development and humanitarian contexts. In 2024, this was reflected in new tools, partnerships, and programming designed to address access barriers and support rights-based, inclusive care.

Inclusive tools and tailored support

A disability-inclusive midwifery training package—Caring for Pregnant Women with Disabilities—was developed in partnership with the Burnet Institute, informed by country needs and expert consultations and scheduled for rollout in 2025.

In collaboration with the <u>Global Disability Innovation Hub</u>, the Regional Office developed <u>customized dignity kits</u> for women and girls with disabilities in humanitarian settings.

Consultations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka helped shape kit contents, distribution strategies, and accessibility features. UNFPA's Asia and the Pacific Regional Office supported these efforts by developing a new guidance on consultation methodologies with persons with disabilities, relevant organizations and caregivers, to strengthen inclusive practices in humanitarian programming.

Cash and Voucher Assistance programmes also became more inclusive in 2024. In Myanmar, disability-inclusive guidance was co-developed to provide practical recommendations, while Sri Lanka began drafting guidelines for sexual and reproductive health support. In Bangladesh, women and girls with disabilities received cash for assistive devices during two flood responses.

Ending obstetric fistula

A regional campaign to eliminate obstetric fistula was launched in 2024, featuring a <u>powerful video</u> linking fistula and child marriage in Nepal, alongside stories of recovery and resilience from Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. Country briefs from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan highlighted national progress in ending fistula and ensuring access to treatment and care.



MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPACT

In 2024, UNFPA exceeded its resource mobilization target in Asia and the Pacific, securing

\$5.2 MILLION

to advance work in sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence prevention, and humanitarian preparedness. These partnerships helped expand programming and deepen engagement with regional and global partners.



Empowering women and girls isn't just right —it's smart.

Philanthropic engagement

The UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office launched its engagement strategy with ASEAN, focusing on the prevention and response to gender-based violence and harmful practices, as well as gender equality and reproductive health. Discussions with the <u>Asian Development Bank</u> (ADB) advanced toward formalizing a memorandum of understanding on gender, health, youth, and population ageing in 2025. Dialogue also progressed on philanthropic partnerships with the Temasek Foundation, MAS Foundation, and the Gift Trust of New Zealand to support maternal health, healthy ageing, and gender equality. Meanwhile, the launch of the <u>Equity 2030 Alliance in Bangkok</u> catalyzed regional action on gender equity through innovation in science, technology and finance.



EQUITY 2030 ALLIANCE: CALLING ON PARTNERS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC TO REDESIGN THE WORLD FOR **WOMEN**

















We can all agree that the world is not designed for women. But the good news is that we can redesign it through our actions, through policies and through investments. The world can progress only when all women and girls have access to gender equitable services, and an equitable future can only be achieved if advances in science and technology include and address the needs of all."

- UNFPA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Pio Smith

More than half of the world's 8 billion people are women and girls. But the world fails women when it comes to their safety, health, and wellbeing.

Globally launched on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2023, Equity 2030 Alliance is UNFPA's concerted global effort to accelerate gender equity in science, technology and financing by 2030.

The UNFPA Regional Office launched Equity 2030 Alliance in Asia and the Pacific on 09 May 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand, urging partners in the region to accelerate actions in redesigning the world for women by initiating projects, policies, investment targets or any other effort that integrates gender equity at all stages of product solutions development.

The event was attended by over 50 invitees from diverse private-sector companies in the region, with speakers from Air Asia MOVE, ASEAN Youth Organization, Asian **Development Bank, and Roche Pharmaceuticals.**





