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## **UN meeting calls for secure supply of contraceptives in developing countries**



UNFPA Executive Director Babatunde Osotimehin

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First ladies, health and finance ministers, and parliamentarians from 12 developing countries at a United Nations meeting declared today that voluntary family planning, secured by a steady supply of contraceptives, is a national priority for saving women's lives.

More than 215 million women in developing countries want to avoid or space pregnancies but are not using modern methods of contraception, according to the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)), which launched the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security in 2007 to support national efforts to ensure a reliable supply of reproductive health essentials.

“As of 31 October, the world will have 7 billion people, of which 1.8 billion are young people, and 90 per cent of them live in developing countries. That implies that 1 billion young women are actively seeking the information and service we are talking about here,” UNFPA Executive Director Babatunde Osotimehin [said](#) in opening remarks to the meeting in New York.

The 12 ‘Stream One’ countries in the Global Programme are Burkina Faso, Haiti, Ethiopia, Laos, Mali, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Dramatic increases in the use of modern methods of contraception are widely reported by participating countries. In Niger, the contraceptive rate increased from 5 per cent in 2006 to 21 per cent in 2010. In Madagascar, it rose by 11 percentage points from 2004 to 2009, when it reached 29.2 per cent.

Supplies are reaching more people in the right place at the right time. In Burkina Faso, the number of health clinics reporting no shortfalls or stock-outs increased from 29 per cent in 2009 to 81 per cent in 2010.

Access to appropriate methods is improving. In Nicaragua, the percentage of service delivery points offering at least three modern methods of contraception increased from 66.6 per cent in 2008 to 99.5 per cent in 2010. In Ethiopia, the increase was from 60 per cent in 2006 to 98 per cent last year.

Country-driven initiatives include training and computers for stronger supply delivery in the national health system, awareness campaigns and advocacy for national policies, strategies and dedicated lines in national budgets for contraceptives.

Dr. Osotimehin called on the 12 countries to put resources in their budget to meet the needs of their women and girls.

“UNFPA will work with you to provide them with education, opportunities and access to information and services including reproductive health commodities, so that each young girl will be a fire, a multiplier, and will add value to the world in which she belongs,” he said.

The First Lady of Sierra Leone, Sia Nyama Koroma, noted that support through the programme has increased the uptake of family planning and other reproductive health programmes, such as fistula activities and the screening of patients for breast cancer.

“Collectively, we are changing the face of maternal and child mortality in Sierra Leone,” she said.

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