



*Photo: UNFPA/Anra Adhikari*

**11.07.2016 – "On this [World Population Day](#) , I urge all governments, businesses and civil society to support and invest in teenage girls. Everyone deserves the benefits of economic growth and social progress. Let us work together to ensure a life of security, dignity and opportunity for all", says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.**

All people should have the right to determine their own future.

Teenage girls around the world face enormous challenges. One in three girls in developing countries is married by the age of 18. Eight hundred girls and women die daily of preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth. More than a quarter of a billion girls and women lack access to modern family planning.

Many teenage girls are considered by their communities or parents to be ready for marriage and motherhood and therefore are forced from school, damaging their future prospects. Even among girls who stay in school, access to basic information about their health, human rights

and reproductive rights can be hard to come by, leaving them vulnerable to illness, injury and exploitation. These challenges are exacerbated among marginalised girls, such as members of ethnic minorities or those living in poverty or remote areas.



*Photo: UN Women/Karin Schermbrucker*

In 1989, the Governing Council of the [United Nations Development Programme](#) recommended that 11 July be observed by the international community as

[World Population Day](#)

, a day to focus attention on the urgency and importance of [population issues](#)

. Issues relating to health and ageing, mass migrations and urbanisation, demand for housing and inadequate food supplies, access to safe drinking water, and so much more. This year's theme for the day is

['Investing in teenage girls'](#)

“While a boy’s options and opportunities tend to expand when he becomes an adolescent, those of a girl too often shrink”, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon says in his message of the day. “A central objective of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) is to leave no one behind.”

"Leaders and communities must focus on and stand up for the human rights of the most marginalised teenage girls, particularly those who are poor, out of school, exploited, or subjected to harmful traditional practices, including child marriage," [UNFPA](#) Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin said. "Marginalised girls are vulnerable to poor reproductive health and more likely to become mothers while still children themselves. They have a right to understand and control their own bodies and shape their own lives."

---

### UNRIC's related links

[UN Population Day](#)

[UNFPA](#)

[UNDPA](#)

[UNWomen on World Population Day](#)

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)