

UNFPA IN ACTION

**Ensuring Rights and Choices for All in
Latin America and the Caribbean**

2024



Mariline is six months pregnant and was displaced by gang violence in Port-au-Prince. She found crucial support in a mobile clinic. © UNFPA Haiti/Wendy Desert.

TABLE OF CONTENT

- 03** Foreword
- 05** Introduction: Inequality Begins Early—But So Can Change
- 07** Maternal Health: Where Inequality Can Be a Matter of Life or Death
- 09** Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices: A Prerequisite for Equality
- 11** Saving Lives in Emergency Contexts: Addressing Inequalities in Humanitarian Settings
- 14** Demographic Visibility: Making Everyone Count
- 16** Evidence for Action: Data-Driven Policies that Drive Equity
- 20** A Call to Action

About the cover: Like any 14-year-old, Flory has big dreams and aspirations. When adolescents fulfill their life projects, they transform their communities for the better. © UNFPA Guatemala

FOREWORD

Inequality and economic challenges threaten the well-being of millions of people in Latin America and the Caribbean. Social progress is uneven, overshadowed by violence, slow poverty reduction, the climate crisis, and migration, all of which disproportionately impact vulnerable populations. The roots of inequality in the region are deep and have stark consequences, as seen, for example, in the silent crisis of adolescent pregnancy and the high number of maternal deaths. Violence against women and girls is yet another pervasive issue. In terms of humanitarian needs, millions of people, including women at heightened risk, require assistance.

Public discourse on sexual and reproductive rights often becomes polarized amidst political and economic instability, posing a threat to the bodily autonomy of women and girls.

Nonetheless, encouraging strides have been made in recent years, offering tangible hope for the future of all people in this region. Innovative, community-centered, and high-level political initiatives are demonstrating the potential for significant positive change.

Well-designed national strategies that take a comprehensive approach, utilize data effectively, allocate sufficient resources, actively involve young people, and prioritize the most vulnerable communities are achieving significant improvements in reducing adolescent pregnancy within relatively short periods.

A growing number of countries in the region are enacting laws and strengthening legal frameworks to provide crucial protection to women against violence and harmful practices, laying the groundwork for a more equitable future.

Countries are also improving their preparedness and technical expertise in developing censuses, national surveys, and statistical analyses that help design more inclusive and pertinent public policies.

Throughout 2024, UNFPA's partnerships with governments, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, regional institutions and development partners were crucial in advancing those key achievements, with the overall goal of helping the region in bridging the inequality gaps and leaving no one behind.

In 2025, as we close the last programming cycle before the pivotal 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNFPA is reinforcing a strategic approach to reducing inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through upstream policy advice, rigorous use of data and evidence to inform key decisions, and strengthened partnerships, UNFPA aims to tackle the critical obstacles impeding progress towards the SDGs. By addressing these systemic challenges, we can unlock the region's potential for economic prosperity, sustainable development, and more equitable societies.

This 2024 report offers a message of hope and underscores the vital connection between rights, health, and data in shaping effective policies and driving sustainable investments. The document showcases solutions that are realistic and have proven their effectiveness.

Looking to the future, UNFPA will continue to leverage the power of disaggregated data to design inclusive public policies and make disparities and exclusion visible. In this way, UNFPA is supporting societies to be future-fit amid fast-paced demographic changes. Innovation is key to making these aspirations a reality in the years to come. The organization is committed to delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Join us on this path for a more equitable and brighter future.

Susana Sottoli

Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

This document, produced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, highlights the organization's work in the region in 2024. UNFPA expresses its gratitude to its strategic partners, both within and outside the region, for their collaboration and financial contributions, which are essential to its operations.

Multimedia content is available.



INTRODUCTION: INEQUALITY BEGINS EARLY— BUT SO CAN CHANGE



In La Guajira, Colombia, Wayuu women demonstrate resilience while confronting climate and migration crises, among other hardships. © UNFPA Colombia/Héctor Suricata.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, inequality is both persistent and deeply rooted. It begins early in life—sometimes even before birth—and compounds over time, shaped by factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, geographic location, disability, migration status, and socioeconomic background. These overlapping forms of exclusion limit access to essential services and opportunities, especially for women, girls, adolescents, indigenous and Afrodescendant populations, and those living in poverty. While the region has made important progress on many development indicators, it remains one of the most unequal in the world, and social gains remain fragile and unevenly distributed.

Against this backdrop, the ability to access basic rights—such as quality maternal health care, protection from violence, access to contraception, or visibility in official data—becomes a powerful determinant of one's future. The denial of these rights is not only a violation of dignity but also a driver of wider social and economic inequalities. When women die in childbirth due to lack of care, when girls are married off too young, when data systems fail to capture the reality of marginalized groups, inequality is reproduced and passed from one generation to the next. There is an urgent need to address these disparities through smart policy decisions and investments that place health, rights, and inclusion at the heart of sustainable development.

UNFPA supports countries in the region to reduce inequalities by expanding access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, strengthening population data systems, and promoting demographic resilience. UNFPA helps make invisible populations visible in data, works to ensure that rights-based services reach those most often left behind, and supports governments in using evidence to develop policies that promote inclusion, equity, and human potential. By linking rights and health with data, policy and sustainable investments, UNFPA helps build a region where every person can thrive—regardless of where they are born, who they are, or what their circumstances may be.

UNFPA in Action is more than a report—it is a window into how change has been happening in 2024, building on the achievements of past years. It showcases how UNFPA and its strategic partners are working throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to tackle some of the region's most entrenched inequalities.

Through stories from the field, voices from the communities and concrete examples of impact—from maternal health care that saves lives, to data that makes invisible populations count—this document illustrates what progress looks like in action. It highlights how targeted interventions and upstream policy work are helping reduce inequality across the life cycle, contributing to a region that is not only more equal, but also more dynamic and better prepared to meet present and future challenges.

MATERNAL HEALTH: WHERE INEQUALITY CAN BE A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

Ending preventable maternal deaths is one of the clearest ways to reduce inequality and uphold the rights and dignity of all people. UNFPA is working with governments and partners to ensure that every woman, everywhere, can give birth safely. Yet, despite progress, too many women still die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth—deaths that are largely preventable. These tragedies are a powerful reminder that access to maternal health care remains unequal. Women in rural areas, indigenous and Afrodescendant communities, migrants, and those living in poverty are far more likely to face dangerous barriers when seeking care.

UNFPA supports countries to close these gaps by improving the quality and reach of maternal health services. In Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela, UNFPA helped develop national action plans to reduce maternal deaths. UNFPA leads regional coordination efforts as the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Task Force for the Reduction of Maternal Mortality, working with other organizations to align strategies and pool expertise. In 2024, through this mechanism, the organization supported the creation of a regional policy on maternal health and a roadmap to put it into action. And through the “Call to Action for the Maternal Health of indigenous Women”, UNFPA is helping promote culturally appropriate services that respond to the needs of indigenous women and girls.

Making pregnancy and childbirth safer also means investing in stronger health systems and trained health workers. UNFPA works to improve emergency care for mothers and newborns, and to support the training of midwives—who can provide up to 87 % of all essential reproductive and maternal health services.



UNFPA supports countries in providing vital prenatal to postpartum care. © UNFPA Brazil/Tuane Fernandes.

UNFPA also advocates for universal health coverage and access to modern contraception, which help all women and adolescents, regardless of age, race, ethnicity or ability, make informed choices about their bodies and future. For instance, UNFPA has analyzed promising models for accessing sexual and reproductive services by persons with disabilities developed in Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay to inspire broader change. In indigenous communities in Belize, Ecuador, and Panama, UNFPA supported post-census studies that revealed how cultural practices, poverty, and service gaps intersect, informing more inclusive national health strategies.

UNFPA is developing tools to measure service gaps and costs to help governments make effective investment decisions in health, ensuring that maternal health is a national priority—even in times of limited budgets or competing crises. It also encourages collaboration across sectors such as education, labour, social protection, water and sanitation, recognizing that many factors shape maternal health. By bringing together evidence, expertise, and partnerships, UNFPA is helping lead the way toward a region where no woman dies giving life—and where every birth is safe.

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, hope is ignited by initiatives that thoughtfully **blend traditional wisdom with modern healthcare**, safeguarding the well-being of mothers and newborns. UNFPA plays a vital role in fostering these good practices by championing the strengthening of midwifery and supporting culturally relevant approaches to care. While these efforts show significant promise, sustained progress will require targeted policies, increased investments, and stronger engagement from governments and other key stakeholders. Ensuring equitable access to skilled birth attendants, addressing systemic barriers, and investing in robust midwifery programmes remain critical priorities. UNFPA's continued commitment, alongside collaborative partnerships, is essential to realizing a future where every pregnancy is safe and every birth is a celebration of life.



Passing down generations of ancestral wisdom, indigenous health providers share vital practices, enrich maternal care, and empower families with time-honoured knowledge.



Traditional midwives have united efforts to be recognized by the institutional health system, weaving ancestral techniques with modern medicine for comprehensive and culturally sensitive maternal support.



To ensure that pregnant women receive respectful, holistic care that values their ancestral heritage and beliefs, cultural traditions are honoured.

Photo credits: UNFPA Venezuela, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office, and Guatemala

ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARMFUL PRACTICES: A PREREQUISITE FOR EQUALITY

Gender-based violence and harmful practices, like child marriage and early unions, continue to affect the lives of millions of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean. These are not only violations of human rights—they also reinforce cycles of poverty, exclusion, and inequality. Women and girls who experience violence often face long-term impacts on their physical and mental health, education and employment. UNFPA works to prevent violence, ensure survivors get the care they need, and help build communities where everyone can live in safety and with dignity.

In partnership with national authorities, UNFPA is leading efforts to strengthen and expand support systems for survivors. During 2024, UNFPA focused on promoting the use of a costing methodology to help the government in Bolivia and the Dominican Republic identify the investment needed to deliver essential services—such as health care, legal aid, and shelter—for survivors of violence. By generating costing evidence, countries can plan and invest more effectively in comprehensive responses to gender-based violence. At the same time, UNFPA is helping to shift the social norms that sustain gender inequality. Last year, a regional strategy to promote behaviour change and transform harmful gender norms was developed and progressively implemented in six countries. From the Caribbean coast of Central America to El Salvador, these efforts are empowering young women and Afrodescendant communities, preventing adolescent pregnancy, and promoting respect, equality, and inclusion.



In Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 out of 3 women face violence. A world where women and girls have freedom, security, and justice is possible. © UNFPA El Salvador.

UNFPA is also scaling up its efforts to eliminate child marriage and early unions—practices that limit girls’ choices and often lead to a lifetime of disadvantage. With support from donors, the third phase of the regional Child Marriage and Early Unions (CMEU) programme is underway in eight countries. This comprehensive approach combines policy change, education, community engagement, and support for girls at risk. In addition, UNFPA has helped expand the reach of General Recommendation No. 5 of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention in 2024, which specifically addresses violence and discrimination against Afrodescendant women, recognizing the multiple forms of exclusion they often face. These efforts reflect a growing regional commitment to intersectional approaches that leave no one behind.

As a key partner in the Spotlight Initiative sponsored by the European Union, UNFPA has played a catalytic role in advancing efforts to end violence against women and girls. Over the course of five years, the Initiative was implemented through two regional programmes and in 11 countries—Argentina, Belize, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago—engaging governments, civil society, and UN partners in a joint push to address one of the region’s most pervasive human rights violations. UNFPA’s leadership helped place the issue at the highest levels of political agendas, increase domestic investments to prevent and respond to violence, and address impunity—positively impacting the lives of millions of women and girls throughout the region. In 2024, UNFPA continued to play a key role in new iterations of the Spotlight Initiative, particularly in Ecuador, where the World Bank is supporting the Initiative with high-scale investments.

The interagency Spotlight initiative has delivered important results, including stronger laws and policies to address gender-based violence, improved services for survivors, and greater public awareness of the issue. UNFPA has contributed by helping ensure that essential services—such as health care, psychosocial support, and legal assistance—are accessible, coordinated, and survivor-centered. It has also played a key role in strengthening national data systems to inform decision-making, and contributed to the major achievements at the country level, such as the development of the Single Registry for Violence, which collects real-time data on cases of violence against women and triggers alerts for rapid response. By generating evidence and working closely with institutions, UNFPA has supported efforts to revise and implement legal frameworks, including the 2019 Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women. These actions reflect UNFPA’s commitment to working in partnership to address the root causes of violence, improve institutional responses, and ensure that no woman or girl is left behind.



In 2024, UNFPA’s pivotal leadership has been essential in bringing forth the MESECVI General Recommendation N° 5. This document is a vital step towards understanding and combating the pervasive gender-based violence against Afrodescendant women in the region. For too long, they have been marginalized. The Recommendation analyses their realities, offering crucial insights and challenging existing narratives. UNFPA champions this document that forges a more inclusive and equitable path. Its findings are a powerful call to action, demanding transformative change and fostering hope for a future free from violence for all Afrodescendant women.

SAVING LIVES IN EMERGENCY CONTEXTS: ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

Crises—whether caused by conflict, migration, or climate change—expose and deepen the inequalities that many women and girls already face. In humanitarian settings, access to basic services like maternal health care, contraception, and protection from gender-based violence can disappear overnight, putting the lives of women and adolescent girls at serious risk. As the lead agency coordinating sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response within the humanitarian system, UNFPA works to ensure that these vital areas remain at the heart of emergency efforts. The organization's response helps protect rights, restore dignity, and support those most at risk—regardless of the circumstances.

Haiti in Crisis

Over 1 million Haitians are internally displaced. The situation is especially dangerous for women and girls: more than 1,500 cases of violence are reported a month, and 75 % of them are sexual violence, exposing survivors to unsafe abortions, bleeding, HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases. During 2024, we supported 18 safe spaces where women who have been abused can safely recover physically and psychologically.

Additionally, UNFPA assisted women in need in 25 camps for internally displaced persons and ensured that 25,000 women had access to vital services such as safe deliveries, HIV/STI treatment, and prevention. We deployed 107 mobile clinics in the metropolitan areas of Port-au-Prince to provide healthcare to affected communities.

Throughout the year, UNFPA has been active in some of the region's most fragile and complex contexts such as Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela. For example, in Venezuela, UNFPA continued to reach hundreds of thousands of women and girls with lifesaving support. This included distributing over 1 million contraceptives, delivering dignity kits, improving maternal care in dozens of hospitals, and setting up safe spaces for survivors of violence. But needs remain urgent. Sustained investment remains essential to safeguard women's lives, support survivors of violence, and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In Panama's Darién province—a remote, dangerous region at the heart of a major migration route—UNFPA has supported both migrants and host communities. In 2023, more than 500,000 people crossed into Panama through Darién, one in three of them women and girls. As part of a UN coordinated response, in 2024, UNFPA helped operate a maternal home in Metetí and worked in collaboration with civil society organizations and national authorities at the San Vicente Temporary Migration Reception Station to provide safe spaces, respond to gender-based violence, and deliver essential health services. By the end of 2024, escalating gang violence had displaced over 700,000 people and left pregnant women struggling to access basic care in Haiti. With 94 % of women and girls at risk of gender-based violence, UNFPA delivered essential medical supplies, operating mobile clinics, and supporting safe spaces and hotlines for survivors. Despite immense challenges, UNFPA is working to ensure that reproductive health and protection services continue for those most at risk.

Climate shocks also put millions at risk. UNFPA's analysis shows that 41 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean who live within 10 kilometers of the coast are exposed to increasingly frequent and severe storms, floods, and hurricanes. Many of the 1,448 hospitals located in these areas provide essential services like maternal health and family planning. These services are among the first to be disrupted—disproportionately affecting women and girls. In 2024, using satellite and geospatial data to identify at-risk populations and inform humanitarian response, UNFPA contributed to emergency responses and the strengthening of health systems to various natural disasters in Honduras, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, among others.

As every year, UNFPA invested in preparedness in anticipation of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June to November. An early procurement process ensured that UNFPA Country Offices and partners had access to dignity kits and their components well in advance —items that protect the health and dignity of women and girls during emergencies. These efforts are part of a larger strategy to build more responsive, data-driven humanitarian systems that prioritize gender equality and protect the most vulnerable. Whether in the middle of a migration crisis, a collapsed health system, or a flooded village, the rights and needs of women and girls must never be sidelined.



In 2024, UNFPA's humanitarian response in the region, with USD 14.4 million in funding, focused on delivering essential services and support directly to individuals, prioritizing their health, safety, and well-being. UNFPA and partners reached more than 195,000 people with sexual and reproductive health services, ensuring access to critical care for more than 175,000 women and girls. This included assisting more than 32,000 women through childbirth in UNFPA-supported facilities, helping them experience safer deliveries. Family planning services reached over 146,000 individuals, empowering them to make informed choices about their reproductive lives.

Humanitarian efforts also prioritized protection and support for those affected by gender-based violence (GBV) by providing GBV prevention, mitigation, and response activities to more than 71,000 survivors and individuals at risk. Proactive measures reached almost 140,000 people with awareness-raising activities and crucial GBV-related information through in-person engagement. Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance was distributed to over 4,300 people for GBV case management and other GBV response and risk mitigation.

Across all emergency situations in the region, UNFPA was engaged distributing more than 19,000 dignity kits, establishing 90 safe spaces for women and girls and 21 youth spaces, thus contributing to safe environments where individuals could access support, information, and community.

DEMOGRAPHIC VISIBILITY: MAKING EVERYONE COUNT

Inclusive and reliable data is the foundation of fair and effective public policy. UNFPA supports countries to strengthen population data systems—ensuring that everyone is counted. In 2024, UNFPA supported censuses, national surveys, and analytical studies in 18 countries and 21 territories across the Caribbean. These efforts include updated census methodologies, technical assistance, and post-census analysis, enabling governments to make evidence-based decisions that reflect the realities of their populations.



The censuses are a vital national undertaking, providing crucial data for planning development and delivering essential services. Accurate information is the cornerstone of sustainable and equitable progress. Ensuring that every person is counted, regardless of their location or background, is fundamental. This process is complex and requires significant coordination, as seen in Bolivia's one-day census.

Yet, being counted is not just about statistics—it's about visibility, inclusion, and rights. Too often, entire communities remain invisible in official statistics. UNFPA is helping change this by promoting intersectional and disaggregated data analysis that reveals how different dimensions of identity—such as gender, age, ethnicity, and disability—combine to create barriers to access.

Pass the Megaphone Campaign

Often overlooked in mainstream discussions, the lack of access to basic healthcare and the impact of racial discrimination creates significant barriers. Young people from Panama share their powerful testimonies to advocate for recognition, data-driven solutions, and the protection of their fundamental rights.

Through the guide *Empowering Inclusion*, UNFPA assists countries in applying an intersectional lens to census and survey data and strengthening how disability is measured and integrated into national statistics. UNFPA and partners have conducted post-census studies on indigenous populations in Belize, Ecuador, and Panama. These studies are helping tailor public policy responses to the specific needs and cultural contexts of indigenous communities, particularly regarding adolescent pregnancy and maternal health.

UNFPA is also advancing tools to better understand and anticipate the region's major demographic and development trends. Through a regional geospatial analysis, the organization is mapping access to hospitals in hazard-prone areas by combining data on infrastructure, population, and climate risks. This work, carried out with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, highlights geographic disparities in healthcare access—especially for women of reproductive age, older persons, and children living in vulnerable coastal or remote areas. In parallel, UNFPA is advising governments on how to plan for population aging—developing data-informed strategies that promote the rights of older persons and strengthen the inclusiveness and sustainability of social protection systems.

From counting the underserved to anticipating tomorrow's challenges, UNFPA's data work is helping governments make smarter, more equitable decisions—reducing inequalities today and building more resilient societies for the future.

EVIDENCE FOR ACTION: DATA-DRIVEN POLICIES THAT DRIVE EQUITY

Strong data does not just describe the world—it can help change it. For governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNFPA is a trusted partner in using demographic and economic evidence to guide national development strategies, define investment priorities, and reduce inequalities. By producing data that shows the human and economic costs of maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, and gender-based violence, UNFPA equips decision-makers with the tools they need to act decisively—and invest where it matters most.

One of the most powerful examples of this work is the MILENA methodology, which measures the socio-economic impact of adolescent pregnancy across five key areas: education, labour participation, income, health expenditures, and lost tax revenue.

Over the past years, numerous countries have worked with UNFPA to estimate the opportunity cost of adolescent pregnancy in their economies and society. In 2024, a regional estimation revealed striking results: adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood not only traps girls in cycles of poverty and exclusion, but costs 15 surveyed countries an estimated USD 15.3 billion each year. Most of this cost—over 88 %—is borne by adolescent girls themselves. Armed with this evidence, governments are better positioned to prioritize, design and finance prevention strategies that break the cycle and create opportunities for the next generation.



The Price of Inequality: Socioeconomic Consequences of Adolescent Pregnancy and Early Motherhood in Latin America and the Caribbean highlights the untapped potential of young women and underscores the economic and developmental gains achievable through prevention. The UNFPA report underscores that adolescent pregnancy disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, perpetuating poverty cycles and hindering socioeconomic progress. Investing in evidence-based prevention strategies, including comprehensive sexuality education and access to quality reproductive healthcare, is presented as a smart economic and social policy with significant returns. Strengthening collaborative efforts and prioritizing this issue are essential to achieving sustainable development outcomes in the region.

UNFPA is also pioneering tools like the National Inclusion Accounts (NIA), which offer a new way to measure inequalities across income levels and population groups. These tools help countries design inclusive public policies—especially those with aging and low fertility trends—by identifying who is being left behind and how public spending can close the gap. Complementing this work, in 2024 UNFPA supported 14 Country Offices in conducting Population Situation Analyses (PSAs)—a strategic tool to integrate population dynamics into national planning frameworks. From Colombia to Guyana, and from Cuba to Panama, UNFPA has provided tailored technical support to improve demographic analysis, close data gaps, and strengthen links between evidence, policy, and budgeting.

Through these efforts, UNFPA is not only producing data, but also changing how data is used: as a driver of equity, a basis for smart investment, and a compass for sustainable development. When policies are rooted in evidence and are people-centered, they are more likely to deliver results that are fair, inclusive, and lasting.



Driven by a desire to empower youth in his community, Alex Barahona, a 16-year-old Nicaraguan, actively seeks information and personal growth through his local “Escuela de Valores”. The programme has enabled Alex to openly communicate his feelings within his family, fostering positive change.



The “Tú No Ta’ Pa’ Eso” (“You are not ready for that”) campaign encourages adolescents to make informed decisions and prevent unintended pregnancies. © UNFPA Dominican Republic.

The Impact Goals Estimation Model (known as MEMI by its Spanish acronym), is a UNFPA developed planning tool aimed at estimating the investment needs and cost-benefit ratio of providing modern contraceptives and comprehensive sexuality education to reduce adolescent pregnancy, among other goals.

The MEMI methodology has been utilized in 14 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean at both national and subnational levels. Notably, UNFPA employed MEMI in 26 municipalities spanning 5 Central American countries, as part of a joint effort with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Republic of Ireland. This application aimed to determine the investment needed to achieve planned reduction goals in adolescent pregnancy. The initiative focuses on Afrodescendant, Creole, Garifuna, and Miskito communities where adolescent fertility rates are higher than national averages. In fact, Afrodescendant adolescents are 50 % more likely to become mothers than their non-Afrodescendant peers.

As an illustration of the use of evidence and costing methodologies to inform programming interventions, this initiative aims at improving adolescent health services, provide culturally sensitive sexuality education, and empower youth and women in the most vulnerable communities in Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Panama.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN COMMEMORATES 30 YEARS OF THE LANDMARK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ICPD)

In a significant step forward, the Fifth Regional Conference on Population and Development that took place in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2024 issued a final declaration that for the first time explicitly included sexual and reproductive rights, a departure from previous statements that referred only to sexual and reproductive health. The declaration also led to the creation of the Cartagena Group, which aims to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities.

With over 560 participants, the event to mark 30 years of the ICPD and its Programme of Action underscored the region's commitment to addressing complex population and development challenges and achieving gender equality.

In close partnership with UN agencies, particularly ECLAC-CELADE, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, UNFPA engaged with Member States before and during the Conference to offer expert support to accelerate the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the ICPD.



Participants analyzed the progress made in the past 30 years and the challenges that remain.

A CALL TO ACTION FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

Reducing inequality is both a matter of principle and a smart investment. In Latin America and the Caribbean there is clear evidence that prioritizing rights, access to services, and the visibility of people left behind leads to stronger, healthier, and more resilient societies. Ensuring that women and girls can access maternal health care, live free from violence, and be counted in national data systems is not just the right thing to do—it also supports social cohesion and sustainable development.

Throughout 2024, UNFPA has worked alongside governments, civil society, and other partners to turn this vision into reality. From strengthening national data systems and rights-based health services to expanding access to contraception and care for survivors of violence, the organization supports practical solutions that deliver results. In some of the region's most complex contexts, this work has helped reduce unmet needs, improve maternal care, and amplify the voices of those too often excluded.

But important challenges remain. Persistent inequalities, adolescent pregnancy, and gaps in access to essential services continue to hold back progress. These issues require coordinated, sustained efforts. Advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, protecting those most at risk, and supporting young people must remain shared priorities.

Looking forward, UNFPA stands ready to continue working with all partners—governments, civil society, donors, and the private sector—to help deliver on national commitments and development goals. Through collective efforts, building more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous societies is possible—where every person can thrive. Where rights and choices for all are guaranteed.



When women have access to quality health services and their reproductive rights are protected, societies become stronger and more resilient. © UNFPA Ecuador



United Nations Population Fund
Latin America and the Caribbean
Regional Office