

Sample Press Release

Please note that this is only a sample. Actual press releases should be customised to describe local events, and must include strong, clear quotes from prominent spokespeople.

Press releases should be no more than 2 pages long.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



[Partner logo]

Include logos of lead partners issuing the release.

HEALTH MINISTRY AND PARTNERS LAUNCH NEW EFFORT TO END FISTULA, IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH IN [COUNTRY]

Headline and sub-head should be short and straightforward.

Government, UN Population Fund, Advocates Push for Prevention, Treatment of Devastating Maternal Disability

Lead paragraph must include simple statement of something new or noteworthy – it must be news.

[City, Date]: At a high-profile event in [City] today, government officials, United Nations representatives, and a range of public health advocates announced strong plans to address the problem of obstetric fistula and improve maternal health in [Country]. Through a series of public events planned for the coming year, the [Name of national network/coalition to eliminate fistula] seeks to build support for more national investment in maternal health, greater resources for fistula treatment, and programmes to educate women on the benefits of skilled maternity care and to fight the stigmatisation of women with fistula.

Put fistula in broader maternal health context.

Obstetric fistula is a preventable and treatable injury to the birth canal that results from prolonged labour, and is particularly common in adolescent mothers and in poor, rural areas where infrastructure is underdeveloped and emergency obstetric care is distant or unavailable. Untreated fistula can result in chronic incontinence and pain, sexual dysfunction, and nerve damage, and often leads to social isolation and stigma. Since its effects may include loss of financial support or the inability to work, many women are pushed further into poverty.

If there is a government commitment, first quote should generally be from the most senior government official available.

"The continued prevalence of fistula is a clear signal that we are not yet doing what needs to be done to protect the lives and health of women in [Country]," said [name and description of government minister or spokesperson]. "This new partnership represents our solemn national commitment to confront and overcome this challenge, and to fulfill the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters by the year 2015."

Replace with actual quote from government, UN agency, or NGO spokesperson, applying the same seniority rule mentioned above.

An estimated [XX] women in [Country] live with the devastating effects of obstetric fistula, and at least [YY] new cases occur each year.

Include national statistics, to show media that fistula is an important issue. If national data is not available, use global statistics on prevalence.

Today's event included several fistula survivors, women who have been successfully treated for obstetric fistula. "I laboured for two days, and my baby died. No one in my village could help me, and there was no money to go to the hospital," said *[Name]* of *[City or village]*, who lived with fistula for more than ten years after her first pregnancy at age 18. "My husband stayed away from me because of the smell, and I felt so alone. Now I have had the surgery, and I finally have my life back."

Replace with actual quotes from fistula survivors from your country.

"I have met so many women who think that the suffering is their fault, and that there's nothing that can be done for them," said *[Name]* of *[City or village]*. "That's what I thought, too. Now I'm here to tell them that they don't have to live this way."

Government officials at today's announcement included *[name and titles]*. Also announcing their participation in the *[Network name]* were a range of NGOs and community-based organisations, including *[names of partner organizations]*, along with representatives of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, *[and other UN agencies, if applicable]*.

Since 2003, UNFPA and partners have waged a global Campaign to End Fistula with the goal of making obstetric fistula as rare in developing countries as it is in the industrialised world. In the last six years, the Campaign has brought fistula to the attention of a wide audience, including the general public, policy makers, health officials, and affected communities. "The disability or death of a woman in pregnancy or childbirth is almost always avoidable, and is a terrible injustice," said *[name]* of UNFPA. "The persistence of fistula is an unacceptable reminder that enormous inequities still exist in access to maternal and reproductive health care and information. Obstetric fistula has been virtually eliminated in the developed world because all women there have access to essential maternal health services – including family planning, skilled care during delivery, and post-natal care. We cannot rest until the same can be said for *[Country]*."

Include quote from UNFPA or NGO partners.

More information about the Campaign is available at www.endfistula.org.

Contact:

UNFPA – *[Country]*
[Name of contact person]
[Phone]
[Email]

[NGO partner or Ministry of Health]:
[Name of contact person]
[Phone]
[Email]

List no more than 2 contacts – be sure that they will be available to respond to media enquiries on day of release and for a full week afterwards.

About the United Nations Population Fund:

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA and its partners launched the global Campaign to End Fistula in 2003. Website: www.unfpa.org.

About *[partner]*:

[Description of partner]. Website: [www.\[URL\].org](http://www.[URL].org).