

Information note on the United Nations Population Award



United Nations Population Award



2025 Edition

United Nations Population Award

The United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Population Award in resolution 36/201 on 17 December 1981. The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, or to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to the awareness of population questions or to their solutions.

The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureates of the Award. The Committee is composed of ten representatives of Member States of the United Nations. In 2025 the Committee reached a quorum of eight Member States consisting of Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Burundi, The Gambia, the Republic of Cyprus, Guatemala, and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which were elected under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for a term of three years (2025-2027).

Laureates of the 2025 Award

1. Individual

Ms. Varsha Deshpande, Founder and Secretary Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal, Republic of India was selected in recognition of her leadership and advocacy efforts related to issues of women's rights and access to justice. She has launched several programmes to address child marriage by empowering adolescent girls and engaging with men and boys. Ms. Deshpande also designs and implements programmes to position women and girls as beneficiaries of and contributors to societal change through community campaigns and collaboration with local governments. At the helm of Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal, which she founded in 1990, she has spearheaded the provision of free legal aid centres to underprivileged women in rural settings since 1991. She is recognized as a strong voice against gender-biased sex selection and played a significant role in policy advocacy and legal action to strengthen the implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, in India.

2. Institution

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), headquartered in France, established in 1928, was selected in recognition of its significant contributions to international collaboration among population researchers and policymakers, addressing critical issues such as reproductive health, migration, and climate change. The IUSSP has supported the establishment of regional population associations, for example, the Asian Population Association, the Latin American Population Association (ALAP), and the Union for African Population Studies (UAPS). Through these initiatives, the organization not only advances scientific knowledge, but also bridges the gap between research and policy, ensuring that population issues remain at the forefront of global development agendas. The core focus is on the global South, fostering collaboration among scholars and sharing scientific insights to improve well-being.

Nominations

Written nominations for the Award may be received from:

- a) Governments of Members States;
- b) Intergovernmental organizations engaged in population-related activities;
- c) Population-related non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the United Nations;
- d) University professors of population or population-related institutions;
- e) Laureates of the Award.

Each nominator is asked to submit no more than one nomination, either for an individual or for an institution.

Only nominations which provide the information requested on the United Nations Population Award data sheet will be considered valid. The data sheet calls for detailed information describing the population-related activities of both the nominator and nominee. Detailed information concerning the nominee, whether an institution or an individual, is needed to ensure full consideration by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award.

The information required includes general background, specific information about population activities, and a full description and assessment of the nominee's contribution to the awareness of population questions or to their solutions. Copies of the data sheet may be obtained by writing to Ms. Diene Keita, Secretary, Committee for the United Nations Population Award
c/o United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 730 3rd Ave, 15th Floor New York, NY 10017, USA. It can also be accessed online at <http://unfpa.org/public/home/about/popaward>.

Nominations for the 2026 Award will be accepted until **31 December 2025**. Nominations received after the deadline will be considered for the 2027 Award. The 2026 Award will be announced in mid-2026 and will be presented by the United Nations Secretary-General in mid-2026. Each award consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a monetary prize.

Resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the United Nations Population Award and the rules of procedure of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award are presented in the following pages.

Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the establishment of the United Nations Population Award

36/201. Establishment of the United Nations Population Award*

The General Assembly,

Recalling the World Population Plan of Action,¹ adopted by the United Nations World Population Conference, held in 1974, and noting with satisfaction the significant contributions made by the United Nations to the implementation of that Plan,

Recognizing the economic and social implications of the population trends, particularly related to development, as described in reports prepared by the United Nations and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which indicate that world population is projected to grow from 4.4 billion in 1980 to approximately 6.1 billion by the year 2000,

Recognizing the need to promote better awareness and understanding of population issues, especially at the individual and community levels of each country and in accordance with national plans and priorities,

Further recognizing the special significance of establishing an award in order to promote that objective,

1. *Decides* to establish an annual award, to be named the United Nations Population Award, for the most outstanding contribution to the awareness of population questions or to their solutions, by an individual or individuals, by an institution or institutions or by any combination thereof, to be presented through the United Nations;

2. *Adopts* the Regulations governing the United Nations Population Award, annexed to the present resolution;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements, under the Regulations, for the commencement of the Award in 1983, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish a Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award to receive voluntary contributions for the Award;

5. *Decides* that all costs related to the Award should be borne out of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award.

*103rd plenary meeting
17 December 1981*

^{1*}As amended by General Assembly decision 41/445, 5 December 1986.

¹*Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75. XIII.3), chap. I.

ANNEX

Regulations governing the United Nations Population Award

Article 1

Aim

The aim of the United Nations Population Award (hereinafter referred to as “the Award”) is to promote the solution of population questions through encouraging the efforts of people in population-related activities and increasing the awareness of population questions.

Article 2

Award

1. The Award shall be presented annually to an individual or to individuals, to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing the awareness of population questions or to their solutions. No staff member, organ or organization of the United Nations system shall be eligible for the Award.
2. The Award shall consist of a diploma, a gold medal and a monetary prize, the amount of which shall be determined each year by the Secretary-General on the basis of the investment income of the Trust Fund for the Award.
3. The recipient or recipients of the Award shall be announced by the beginning of March each year, and the Award shall be presented by the Secretary-General in the middle of June.

Article 3

Financial matters

1. All financial resources related to the Award shall be composed of the voluntary contributions made by Member States specifically for the Award.
2. Contributions for the Award shall be deposited in the Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award, to be established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981.
3. The Trust Fund shall be administered by the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities on behalf of the Secretary-General.
4. All costs relating to the Award shall be financed from the investment income of the Trust Fund. The administrative costs shall be kept as low as possible.
5. The Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities shall submit to the General Assembly an annual report concerning the Award and the Trust Fund.

Article 4
Selection of laureates

1. The recipient or recipients of the Award shall be selected from among those nominated under article 5 below, by a Committee for the United Nations Population Award, to be composed of:
 - (a) Ten representatives of Member States of the United Nations elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years, with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical representation and the need to include those Member States that have made contributions for the Award;
 - (b) The Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, to serve as *ex officio* members;
 - (c) Five eminent individuals who have made significant contributions to population-related activities, to be selected by the aforementioned members of the Committee, to serve as honorary members in an advisory capacity for a renewable term of three years.
2. The Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities shall act as Secretary of the Committee.
3. The rules of procedure of the Committee shall be established by the Economic and Social Council.

Article 5
Nomination of candidates

1. Written nominations for the Award may be received from the following:
 - (a) Governments of Member States;
 - (b) Intergovernmental organizations engaged in population-related activities;
 - (c) Population-related non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the United Nations;
 - (d) University professors of population-related studies and heads of population-related institutions;
 - (e) Laureates of the Award.
2. Nominations shall reach the Secretary-General not later than 31 December of the year prior to the year for which nominations are to be considered.
3. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award shall be convened during the month of February to select the laureate or laureates of the year.

Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly

61/268. United Nations Population Award

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981, entitled “Establishment of the United Nations Population Award”,

Recalling also its decision to set up the Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award and to finance all costs relating to the Award from the investment income of the Fund,

Stressing the importance of the Award in promoting excellence in the field of population and development for the reduction of poverty and for sustainable development,

Noting that the investment income of the Trust Fund has fallen below the monetary value of the Award and related expenditure,

1. *Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the 2006 United Nations Population Award;¹

2. *Invites* Member States to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award in order to generate adequate investment income and sustain the Award;

3. *Welcomes* additional contributions from foundations, individuals and other sources.

*102nd plenary meeting
25 May 2007*

¹ A/61/273.

Decision of the Economic and Social Council on rules of procedure

Decision 1982/112.

Rules of procedure of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award*

Meetings

Rule 1

1. The Committee shall hold a regular meeting in February of each year to select the laureate(s) of the year.
2. Special meetings may be convened with the agreement of six voting members of the Committee.
3. All meetings shall take place at United Nations Headquarters.

Chairman

Rule 2

1. The Committee shall elect a Chairman at each regular meeting, who shall serve until a successor is elected at the next regular meeting. The Chairman shall be eligible for re-election.
2. In the absence of the Chairman, the Secretary-General or his representative shall act as Chairman.

Selection of honorary members

Rule 3

1. Honorary members may be selected at any meeting of the Committee, whenever there is a vacancy or in anticipation of a vacancy during the next 12 months.
2. Honorary members selected to fill an unexpired term shall serve for the balance of that term.

***Ex officio* members**

Rule 4

The *ex officio* members may, if necessary, act in the Committee through representatives.

Quorum

Rule 5

Representatives of six of the ten members of the Committee elected by the Economic and Social Council shall constitute a quorum.

*As amended by ECOSOC decision 1987/129, 26 May 1987

Decisions

Rule 6

1. Unless otherwise provided, decisions shall be made by a majority of the elected and *ex officio* members present and voting.
2. Decisions under rule 3 or rule 7 shall be made by secret ballot.
3. When one or more candidates are to be selected under rule 3 or rule 7, each voting member of the Committee may vote for as many candidates as there are places to be filled, and those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes shall be considered selected.
4. If the number of candidates selected under paragraph 3 above is less than the number of the places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held on a basis of similar to the first one, to fill the remaining places, provided that once one or more individual candidates have been selected pursuant to rule 7, paragraph 2, the Committee may decide not to select additional ones up to the maximum originally decided. From such additional ballots the candidate obtaining the least number of votes, or on the proposal of the Chairman, several candidates having received few votes shall be eliminated.
5. If any ballot results in a tie vote among all candidates, it shall be repeated; if the tie persists for two such repeated ballots, the Chairman shall select a successful candidate by drawing lots.

Selection of laureates

Rule 7

1. The Secretary of the Committee shall present to the Committee at the regular meeting all the nominations, received during the previous year, for laureates eligible for the United Nations Population Award.
2. The Committee shall consider the nominations submitted to it and decide on the recipient or recipients of the Award. As a rule, if the Committee decides to make the Award to more than one nominee, the Committee shall select: (a) no more than two individuals; or (b) no more than two institutions; or (c) no more than one individual and one institution.

Privacy of meetings and reports

Rule 8

1. The meetings of the Committee shall be closed.
2. The proceedings of the Committee shall be reflected in a report to be submitted to the Secretary-General after each regular meeting, which report shall be attached to the annual report to be submitted to the General Assembly by the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Rules of procedure

Rule 9

1. Any of these rules may be suspended by a decision of two thirds of the elected and *ex officio* members present and voting, provided that such a decision is not inconsistent with General Assembly resolution 36/201 or any other decision of the Assembly.

2. Any procedural matter not covered by these rules shall be settled in accordance with the rules applicable to committees of the Economic and Social Council.

15th Plenary Meeting
26 April 1982

United Nations Population Award Laureates

2025 laureates

Ms. Varsha Deshpande, Founder and Secretary Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal, *Republic of India*
The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), *France*

2024 laureates

Her Excellency Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*
National Alliance to End Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage in Ethiopia,
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

2023 laureates

Her Excellency Mrs. Angeline Ndayubaha Ndayishimiye, First Lady, *Republic of Burundi*
African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), *Republic of Malawi*

2022 laureates

Ms. Emma Inamutila Theofelus, *Republic of Namibia*
National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN),
Republic of Indonesia

2021 laureates

Commissaire Hassane Haousseize Zouera, *The Niger*
Dirección General de Población de Oaxaca, *Mexico*

2020 laureates

Her Majesty Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, Queen Mother, *Kingdom of Bhutan*
HelpAge India, *India*

2019 laureates

Dr. Mamadou Taranga, *Republic of The Gambia*
National Peace Hut Women of Liberia, *Republic of Liberia*

2018 laureates

Dr. Sir Prince Ramsey, *Antigua and Barbuda*
Guttmacher Institute, *United States of America*
Save a Child's Heart, *Israel*

2017 laureates

Prof. Hans Rosling (Posthumous), *Sweden*
Association des Chefs Traditionnels du Niger (ACTN), *The Niger*

2016 laureates

Dr. Carmen Barosso, *Brazil*
Childbirth with Dignity Foundation, *Republic of Poland*

2015 laureates

Dr. Thoraya Obaid, *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC), *Republic of Kenya*

2014 laureates

Father Dr. Aldo Marchesini, *Italy*
Jhpiego, *United States of America*

2013 laureates

Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, *Republic of Uganda*
The International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research (IICPSR), *Arab Republic of Egypt*

2012 laureates

Ms. Adrienne Germain, *United States of America*
Federation of Reproductive Health Associations (FRHAM), *Malaysia*

2011 laureates

Prof. Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, *Islamic Republic of Iran*
Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographique (IFORD), *Republic of Cameroon*

2010 laureates

Mr. William Henry “Bill” Gates III and Ms. Melinda French Gates, *United States of America*
Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), *Japan*

2009 laureates

Dr. Mahmoud Fahmy Fathalla, *Arab Republic of Egypt*
Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense, *Nicaragua*

2008 laureates

Dame Billie Miller, *Barbados*
Family Care International, *United States of America*

2007 laureates

Dr. Hossein Malek Afzali, *Islamic Republic of Iran*
Dr. Allan Rosenfield, *United States of America*
Comité National de Population, *Algeria*
National Population Family Development Board, *Malaysia*

2006 laureates

Dr. Halida Hanum Akhter, *People’s Republic of Bangladesh*
Fondation pour la Santé Reproductive et l’Éducation Familiale (FOSREF), *Haiti*

2005 laureates

Ms. Mercedes Concepcion, *Republic of the Philippines*
Asociación Pro Bienestar de la Familia de Guatemala, *Guatemala*

2004 laureates

Prof. John C. Caldwell, *Australia*
Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

2003 laureates

Mr. Werner Fornos, *United States of America*
Family Planning Association of Kenya, *Republic of Kenya*

2002 laureates

Dr. Kwasi Odoi-Agyarko, *Ghana*
EngenderHealth, *United States of America*

2001 laureates

Dr. Nafis Sadik, *Pakistan*
Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning, *Japan*

2000 laureates

Prof. Ismail Awadallah Salam, *Arab Republic of Egypt*
Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar (MEXFAM), *Mexico*

1999 laureates

Dr. Syed Alireza Marandi, *Islamic Republic of Iran*
National Committee for Population and Family Planning, *Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*

1998 laureates

Hugh H. Wynter, *Jamaica*
Sabiny Elders Association, *Republic of Uganda*

1997 laureates

Elizabeth Aguirre de Calderón Sol, *El Salvador*
Toshio Kuroda, *Japan*
Mechai Viravaidya, *Thailand*

1996 laureates

Leticia Ramos Shahani, *Republic of the Philippines*
Pathfinder International, *United States of America*

1995 laureates

Halfdan Mahler, *Denmark*
Inter-African Committee on the Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children,
Republic of Senegal

1994 laureates

President Hosni Mubarak, *Arab Republic of Egypt*
Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation, *Türkiye*

1993 laureates

Fred T. Sai, *Ghana*
Mainichi Shimbun Population Problems Research Council, *Japan*

1992 laureates

J. R. D. Tata, *India*

The Population Council, *United States of America*

1991 laureates

Julia J. Henderson, *United States of America*
Centre for Population Studies and Responsible Parenthood, *Ecuador*

1990 laureates

Professor Alfred Sauvy, *France*
National Family Health and Population Council of Mauritius, *Republic of Mauritius*

1989 laureates

President Muhammad Soeharto, *Republic of Indonesia*
Programme national de Bien-être familial de Togo, *Togo*

1988 laureates

Shidzue Kato, *Japan*
PROFAMILIA, *Colombia*

1987 laureates

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, *People's Republic of Bangladesh*
National Family and Population Office of Tunisia, *Tunisia*

1986 laureate

National Population Council of Mexico (CONAPO), *Mexico*

1985 laureate

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), *United Kingdom*

1984 laureates

Carmen A. Miró, *Panama*
Sheldon J. Segal, *United States of America*

1983 laureates

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, *India*
Qian Xinzong, *People's Republic of China*