

Ending fistula within a generation

**Statement on the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula by
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Obstetric fistula is almost exclusively a condition of the poorest, most vulnerable and most marginalized women and girls. It afflicts those who lack access to the timely, high-quality, and life-saving maternal health care that they so desperately need and deserve, and that is their basic human right. As a doctor myself and, most importantly, father to four beloved daughters, I am personally outraged that fistula, which is wholly preventable, still occurs in today's world.

The theme of this year's International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, "***End fistula within a generation***", is a call to transform the world. As we talk about ending polio, HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation and so many other forms of suffering, so must we commit to stepping up our efforts to end fistula, once and for all. This means heeding the call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind, especially those most neglected, invisible and powerless, including the women and girls living with fistula. Now is the time, and I am confident we can do it.

For UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, ending fistula remains one of our highest priorities, and we will continue to accelerate efforts, both in our own work and within the United Nations system. The global Campaign to End Fistula, launched in 2003 by UNFPA and partners, has made significant progress towards eliminating fistula and supporting its survivors through prevention, treatment, social reintegration and advocacy. UNFPA has supported more than 70,000 fistula repair surgeries for women and girls in need, and Campaign partners have enabled many more to receive treatment.

Yet, far more remains to be done. We cannot give up until every woman and girl has the preventive care she needs. We cannot give up until every single woman and girl living with fistula has been treated. We cannot give up until every fistula survivor receives the social reintegration and support services she needs to rebuild her life, reclaim her dignity, and restore her hope and dreams for the future.
