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**Message of the Secretary-General on World Population Day
11 July 2015**

Not since the end of the Second World War have so many people been forced from their homes across the planet. With nearly 60 million individuals having fled conflict or disaster, women and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable. Violent extremists and armed groups are committing terrible abuses that result in trauma, unintended pregnancy and infection with HIV and other diseases. Shame and accountability rest squarely on the shoulders of the perpetrators who wage cowardly battles across the bodies of innocents.

These women are far from just victims. They have hopes, plans and the potential to make important contributions to our common future. We must staunchly protect women's health, including their sexual and reproductive health, and address their needs as a priority in emergency relief operations. At the same time, we must continuously advance women's human rights in times of both turmoil and calm in order to enable them to help avert conflict, stand strong should it strike, and foster the healing that is so badly needed in war-torn societies.

As the United Nations marks its 70th anniversary this year, let us take strength from our founding mission to give hope and support to the most vulnerable. On this World Population Day, I urge countries to commit to bold results that will make 2015 a time of global action, putting people first so that they help build resilience, peace and sustainable prosperity for generations to come.