



UNFPA—because everyone counts!



## PRESS RELEASE

### KABUL INAUGURATES THE FIRST YOUTH HEALTH LINE IN AFGHANISTAN TO CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2012

**Kabul, 11 August 2012** – The Ministry of Public Health, with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Population Fund and its implementing partner, Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA), established a phone line to provide youth friendly health counseling. Starting from today, by calling the number 120, it is now possible to receive accurate youth health information including reproductive health, counseling, and referrals to appropriate services or resources.

The Youth Health Line is reachable by dialing 120 from any network for free. The service is available in Dari and Pashto every day initially from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The anonymity of the Youth Health Line allows the caller to ask questions that may be difficult to address in a face-to-face context.

*“Girls and boys in our society often do not have anyone to turn to for help. However, by calling the Youth Health Line, 120, they can talk to a telephone counselor without being embarrassed or judged, and receive a referral to a youth-friendly clinic where they can get further information about their situation. The Ministry of Public Health is glad to celebrate the International Youth Day 2012 by providing a new and youth-friendly service that is very much in line with this year’s theme: Building a Better World: Partnering with Youth”* said H.E. Dr. Suraya Dalil, Minister of Public Health.

The Youth Health Line will have two counselors (one male, one female) employed and trained by the Ministry of Public Health. The counselors will follow the Youth Health Line main principles: provide accurate and timely information, provide an opportunity for dialogue, give support to callers by listening to them and counseling them and when necessary provide referral information.

With a simple act of dialing the short code, 120, free of charge, young people in Kabul will be able to know more on issues such as reproductive health and family planning, early marriage and early pregnancies health consequences, communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections, how sport and nutrition are related to health, substance abuse, and what to do in case of gender based violence.

*“Evidence has shown that comprehensive sexual education that is age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and life skills-based can provide young people with the knowledge, skills and efficacy to make informed decisions about their sexual life. When young people are equipped with accurate and relevant information, and access to counseling and Reproductive Health services that are non-judgmental and affordable, they are better able to take advantage of educational and other opportunities that will impact their lifelong well-being, and also avoid unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, improve their sexual and reproductive health and protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections including HIV”* said Dr. Laurent Zessler, UNFPA Representative in Afghanistan.

**End**

**Contact:**

**Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Hafizullah Fayaz – Cell: +93 70 051 2943;**

**E-mail: [dr.hafiz.fayaz@gmail.com](mailto:dr.hafiz.fayaz@gmail.com)**

**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Ahmadullah Amarkhil – Cell: +93 70 026 3232;**

**E-mail: [amarkhil@unfpa.org](mailto:amarkhil@unfpa.org)**