



STATEMENT BY MAJOR GENERAL, IOANE NAIVALURUA, AMBASSADOR AT LARGE OF FIJI AT THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT BEYOND 2014

Priority theme: "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post – 2015 development agenda" New York, 22 September 2014, 1pm

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates

Firstly, allow me to congratulate Your Excellency on your election as President. The Fiji delegation assures you of its full support and cooperation.

At the outset Mr. President, Fiji aligns itself with the statement by Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China and further welcomes the priority theme for this special session, as provided in General Assembly resolution 58/126. This theme is most appropriate as we now build on from the important progress made not only towards agreeing to the post-2015 development agenda, but more importantly in ensuring its effective implementation.

As we gather here for this special session, twenty years after the Cairo International Conference, we are reminded of the global consensus on the integration of diverse aspects of population, development and human

rights. Fiji's commitment to this global consensus as well as its subsequent reviews is evident in our evolving policies and programmes – where much progress has been recorded in the last two decades. Mr. President, although Fiji is faring well with the implementation of the programme of action, there remains much to be done.

Mr. President, Fiji is a small island developing state with over 300 islands and a population that is at once highly concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas, while also being dispersed around remote outer-lying islands. Addressing all these core ICPD issues is made all the more challenging for Fiji by the additional layer of existential challenges caused by vulnerabilities to climate change, frequent natural disasters and environmental degradation.

Mr. President, the juxtaposition of such stark situations in a small island developing state brings with it unique challenges for policy formulation and implementation of 21st century sustainable development solutions. The availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services is a major element of the solutions, particularly in meeting the special needs of the most vulnerable groups. Mr President, the 2013 Constitution of Fiji encompasses a broad range of civil, political and socio-economic rights, including the right to health and achieving

progressive realization of every person's right to health care services, including reproductive health care. Fiji's Ministry for Social Welfare, in partnership with and through the funding support of UNFPA, has a sexual reproductive health programme working directly with rural women and young people. The programme is exercised through the 60 women's resource centres the Government has built around the country in rural and maritime areas. From January to July of this year, 30 rural women's groups and youth groups have been trained to be peer educators within their rural settlements.

Mr. President, the Government of Fiji also recognizes the importance of addressing inequalities and the empowerment of women and girls in equitable and sustainable development. On the eve of International Women's Day this year, Fiji launched its National Gender Policy, which is our guiding document for mainstreaming gender issues across all sectors and within all spheres of national life. The Government of Fiji is committed to increasing women's and young people's participation in decision-making and in political, social and economic processes at all levels. We believe this to be all the more important as we look ahead to the post-2015 development agenda. We are confident this agenda will reinforce the inextricable links between gender equality and sustainable development goals in national development.

Mr. President, this is an opportune time to underline the importance of data in development planning. My delegation has noted in UN reports and documentation that statistical data from our Pacific Islands region is patchy or often listed as missing. We would like to stress the importance of timely and appropriately disaggregated and verified data in designing evidence-based programs and development planning. For this purpose there is an urgent need for adequate resource allocation, and we urge cooperative action and collaboration between governments, relevant UN agencies and other stakeholders to ensure necessary capacity for effective integration of disaggregated and verified population dynamics data pertaining to our region.

Mr. President, in conclusion, let me reiterate Fiji's firm commitment to the further implementation of the ICDP Programme of Action and to addressing priority areas, particularly where either the global review has found gaps in implementation, or our own national analyses have found greater needs. To ensure a robust approach to implementation, we recognise that mutually supportive partnerships are crucial. We must garner resource allocation from all available sources, and partners have clearly not reached optimal levels of cooperation to date.

Mr President, it is imperative that national efforts be dedicated towards bridging gaps in implementation, advancing the ICPD agendas and ensuring that these issues are secured in the Post-2015 Development agenda. They must remain at the forefront for governments and the lead UN agencies if we are to maintain a sustainable planet for the generations to come.

I thank you Mr. President