

World Youth Alliance Oral Intervention

Thank you Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates and members of Civil Society,

World Youth Alliance, a global coalition of young people promoting the dignity of the human person in policy in culture, welcomes the opportunity to present its views on fertility, reproductive health and development to the Commission. The relationship between population, fertility, economics and development is complex because it depends on the human person, whose creativity and innovative potential cannot be measured. Therefore, all population and development policies should have the human person as their end.

The World Youth Alliance recognizes that all human beings have intrinsic dignity, and that the authentic development of society can occur only in a culture that fosters integral human development - characterized by physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional growth- in a climate of respect for the human person and the family. Proper social and cultural development is a necessary condition for, rather than a result of, economic development.

Certain countries, chiefly developed ones, are facing very low demographic replacement rates. In the long run, this will affect the care of the elderly and will thus affect economic stability. The difficulty of reconciling work with family life, the anxiety-inducing social environment, and fear of the future are facts that hinder individuals from achieving their desired fertility size. In developed countries, governments can tackle these three barriers through education about the intrinsic value of both women and men, and by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities, in both formal and informal work.

People are the drivers of development, and therefore, we believe that it is through investing in the human person that we enable human flourishing and economic development. In fact, development occurs because of large stores of human and cultural capital unhindered by government corruption, not by the management of human talent, or government management programs to control or reduce

population. Therefore, we propose the promotion of **education for freedom**, and advocate **family and human-centred development**.

Education connects reproductive health to development. Too often, education is sacrificed for a government's perceived need to decrease fertility rates and reach demographic targets. This stalls development, because no investment is made in educating citizens, who, with the right knowledge, skills and creativity, have the potential to generate wealth and drive development.

Reproductive health education should be pragmatic, teaching women and men about the reality of their fertility and what it means for their lives. Reproductive health programmes should be designated to serve the needs of women, including adolescents, and must involve women in the leadership, planning, decision-making, management, implementation, organization and evaluation of their health. Education programmes should help couples to meet their reproductive goals: spacing their children and managing their fertility in order to reduce the incidence of high-risk pregnancies, morbidity and mortality.

A knowledge based system of health care ensures that desired health outcomes are identified and achieved. A relationship between patient outcomes and government health care provision can be attained. This knowledge is crucial not only in the management of desired fertility outcomes, but also as a monitor of overall female health. Such an approach creates a partnership between the patient and the medical system, and invests in the education and empowerment of individuals to participate in managing their health and fertility.

Human capital is first and best developed within the family, the basic unit of society. It is within the family that children first understand their dignity, realize their potential and are prepared to be responsible agents of economic and social development. We recognize that both the role of the mother and the father are significant to the child's development. Civil society, governments, and international institutions can play an important role in the development of human capital by creating supportive environments in which families thrive.

Mr. Chair,

Person-centred development recognizes that human beings have inherent worth that is not dependent on a particular time, place or situation in society. The freedom proper to the human person cannot be compromised for economic goals, no matter how laudable. Human beings are the objects of sustainable development and economic prosperity and all population and development policies must be oriented around this principle. We invite persons at all levels of society to use their creativity, skills and resources to create the necessary environment for authentic development.

Thank you,