

**Statement by Mr. Mohammad HassaniNejad
Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the Forty-fourth session of the Commission
on Population and Development (23-27 April 2012)
Under agenda item 4: Adolescents and Youth**

In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning I wish to express my delegations sincere congratulations to you and other members of the Bureau for your election and wish you all the best during your chairmanship. I would also like to appreciate Secretary General for his report to the Commission on the theme of this session: "adolescents and youth".

The report provides a good understanding of the challenges that youth and governments are facing particularly in the areas related to sexual and reproductive health. However, we are of the view that the report could take a more positive tone towards opportunities that an acceptable proportion of young population would offer to countries. After all, young population has to be considered as solid opportunity for any given society.

Mr. Chairman,

One in three Iranians is between the ages of 15 and 29. Furthermore, 60 percent of the population in Iran is under 30. These figures reflect part of our hope for having a far better prospect for the future of the country comparing to today. We take this young population as our greatest asset towards a prosperous future. They are the key for a better society; the one which is healthier, happier and more productive.

With such understanding, the government has willingly provided appropriate opportunities for participation and involvement of youth in all different aspects of their social life. Their engagement has so far born significant positive achievements. A new generation of self-confident young scientists, artists, thinkers and engineers are undertaking the responsibility of transforming the economic, technological and cultural life of the country.

Such enormous opportunities in development prospect of the country can be attributed to a young, educated and productive population. Undoubtedly, full realization of such potential needs a strong developmental approach and planning. The Fifth National Development Plan was developed with such an understanding and vision.

While health care services and education have been extended to the most remote parts of the country, boys and girls' full and equal access to tertiary and higher education as well as highest standards of health has been vigorously pursued with significant results. We will continue our efforts to ensure that every child has access to a full range of quality education and health services.

The backbone of the national programs on adolescents and youth in coming years, beyond providing education and health, are reduction of poverty; legal support against abuse and violence; improving maternal and new-born health, improvement of national capacity to collect, analyze and utilize data on adolescents and youth; preparedness against emergency situations and supporting adolescents and youth in natural disasters.

Meanwhile, the government is fully aware of the challenges that our youth and consequently the country as a whole are facing with. On top of them are the creation of enough productive and decent job for the young population along with promotion of the institution of family in the society. National development plan has also paid special attention to these challenges and needs; and taking into account all the constraints the country is confronting with, remarkable achievements have so far been realized.

It is also worth mentioning that some external factors are negatively impacting national efforts to create a constructive and healthy environment for the young population.

Cognizant of the situation, just recently a new line ministry for youth is established to specifically deal with special needs of the young population. It is expected that the new ministry helps providing required environment for optimal realization of the potentials of adolescents and youth in favor of their own and the country's prosperity.

I thank you very much.