



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

350 EAST 35TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10016
<http://www.china-un.org>

**Statement for Item 4 at the 47th Session of
the UN Commission on Population and Development**

H. E. Madam CUI Li
Vice Minister
National Health and Family Planning Commission
People's Republic of China
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Mr. Chair,

The ICPD in 1994 established the fundamental principle of human orientation by embedding population issues into the framework of sustainable development and combining them with health and rights protection of individuals. We are delighted to learn that the objectives set up by the ICPD are implemented fairly effectively through joint global efforts, which is evidenced in marked decline of fertility rate in most countries, significant slowdown of natural population growth rate, further reduction of infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, effective improvement of human health status and continuous upgrading of people's living standards. These population dynamics bring us development opportunities. However, we must also remain aware that the implementation of the ICPD fetches enormous diversities in different aspects, and that different countries and regions are confronted by different new challenges. The 20th anniversary of the ICPD also marks the coming deadline of MDG attainment. As such, we need to grasp this opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the pressing need to pace up the attainment of MDG 5, i.e., universal access to reproductive health.

The Chinese delegation holds that, under the context of globalization, we need conduct in-depth studies of the relations between population and sustainable development with a full emphasis on and accurate grasp of the trend of population development; we also need focus on our core targets and honor our commitments with more active, responsible and effective attitudes, i.e., focus on population and development, promote human-centered reproductive health and women empowerment. We call for national governments to uphold the principles and goals of the ICPD and fully mobilize national and international resources to enable developing countries access to more resources for attainment of the ICPD objectives. In this end, we would like to share our experiences with other countries, draw reference from each other and positively consider incorporating population issues into the Post-2015 development agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

China is a developing country with 1.36 billion people. A large population size will remain a basic national situation that China has to face in the long run. The Chinese government has made serious efforts to honor its commitments to the ICPD and the MDGs. Specifically, China has persistently centered on holistic human development,

taken the uniquely Chinese approach of coordinated and sustainable development of population, economy, society, resources and the environment, devoted itself to economic development, poverty eradication, universal access to education, improvement of health services, enhancement of women's status and promotion of long-term balanced population development. The accomplishments to date have been very impressive.

Self-conscious and proactive adjustment of population growth via a population policy in a developing country that boasts about 1/5 of the world population is both a great social project and an unprecedented social experiment. Thanks to its long relentless efforts, China has effectively controlled excessive population growth, reduced its fertility rate to below replacement level, and against an economy that is not yet developed, successfully achieved the historical demographic transition. Between the early 1970s and 2013, maternal mortality ratio and infant mortality rate in China went down from 120/100,000 to 23/100,000 and from 47.0‰ to 9.5‰, respectively, both attaining the concerned MDGs ahead of schedule. During the same period, average life expectancy in China went up from 61 to 75 years. China's active explorations and successful practices in the population programme has promoted rapid long-term economic growth, improved people's livelihood and development, and made positive contribution to the world population and development.

The Chinese government has taken a series of pertinent policy measures to implement the ICPD and the MDGs.

1. Great efforts to reduce and eradicate poverty: China always regards reduction and elimination of poverty as an important task and objective of socioeconomic development, and has incorporated pro-poor development into its national overall programme for economic and social development and intensified such poverty reduction and development in a continuous manner. From 2001 to 2010, the central and local governments increased fiscal input into poverty reduction from RMB12.75 billion to RMB34.93 billion, an average annual increase rate of 11.9%. As per the poverty definition of one US dollar per day per person, the poverty population of China was reduced from 208 million in 2002 to 62 million in 2010. This, plus the achievement of having rural residents live at and above subsistence level enables China to become the earliest country to attain the MDG of "halving the proportion of poverty population", which also accelerates the global process of poverty reduction.

2. Active response to population ageing: As the most populous developing country and one of the earliest developing countries entering an aged society, China attaches close attention to population ageing. The National Working Committee on Ageing was set up as the coordination and advisory body under the State Council in charge of ageing issues nationwide. Guiding policy documents such as the *China 12th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Undertakings for the Old Aged* and the *Plan for the Construction of a Community-Based Old-age Support Service System (2011-2015)* were produced, and the *PRC Law on Protection of Rights and Interests of Senior Citizens* were promulgated and timely revised. Efforts to develop a non-government old-age insurance and medical insurance system have led to full coverage of basic old-age insurance and basic medical

insurance in China. Positive progress is witnessed in the development of a community-based old-age support service system integrating family care, community support and institutional assistance.

3. Steady promotion of new-type urbanization: With the proportion of urban population in China exceeding 50% in 2011, the first time in the Chinese history, “rural China” is transforming to “urban China” with rural-to-urban population migration being its main drivers. Attaching close attention to the strategy on demographic urbanization, the Chinese government has made proactive efforts to address challenges and difficulties emerging in the process of population migration, such as incorporating migrants into the urban public service system to enable migrants ready access to equitable public services and to protect rights and interests of migrants. Since entry into the new century, China has set up a preliminary urban framework characterized by multi-layer coordinated development with large cities as the core, small and medium cities as the backbone and townships as the foundation. Recently, China has formulated the *National Plan for New-type Urbanization(2014-2020)* to drive forward human-centered urbanization, facilitate settlement of rural migrants in urban areas, promote orderly movement, rational distribution and social integration of population, and ensure urbanization towards the correct direction.

4. Improved provision of family planning and reproductive health services: The Chinese government insists upon incorporating solution to population issues into its national overall programme for socioeconomic development and upon practice of family planning according to the principle of government guidance combined with free will of the people. In 2001 China developed the *Law on Population and Family Planning* and the *Regulations on Management of Family Planning Clinical Services*, placing family planning on the orbit of rule by law, defining basic civil rights such as reproductive health, gender equality, informed choice of contraceptives and assurance of health and safety, etc., and stipulating on free provision of essential contraceptives and services thereof. In 2009, China listed immunization, child health care and maternal health care as national essential public health services, and included hospital child delivery of pregnant rural women, prevention and control of mother-to-infant transmission of HIV/AIDS, syphilis and hepatitis B, etc. on the list of significant public health services. In the implementation of adolescent health education and service programmes, the Chinese government attaches persistent attention to the role of NGOs such as the family planning associations. Peer education and participatory activities, etc. have increased adolescent knowledge about sexual and reproductive health at campus and beyond, built up adolescent life skills and improved adolescent ability for prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS.

In March 2013, the Chinese government merged the former Ministry of Health and the former National Population and Family Planning Commission to set up the National Health and Family Planning Commission as part of its institutional restructuring exercise, which further optimizes public resource allocation, focuses more on meeting public demands, more on improving life quality of all people at all stages of life, and more on family development, and offers better-quality health and family planning services to the general public. Meanwhile, China is actively adjusting and improving its fertility policy

in line with current demographic changes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite all these distinctive achievements after the adoption of a series of policy measures in the areas of population and development, China is still confronted with many problems and challenges that it cannot afford to neglect. In a period to come, the total population in China will keep growing until it reaches the peak value of about 1.46 billion around 2030. For a fairly long time to come, the basic national situation of China in the sense of a large population will remain unchanged, the heavy pressure of such a large population on socioeconomic development will remain unchanged, and the tension between population, resources and the environment will remain unchanged. Further, China will continue to be frustrated by other demographic momentums or problems, such as accelerating population ageing, gradual shrinkage of the working-age population, lingering of the abnormal sex ratio at birth, more and more active population migration, and increasingly marked diversity of families, etc.

The Chinese delegation believes that people are the subject of socioeconomic development. The Chinese government will devote itself to promoting long-term balanced population development, focus on the balance between quantity, structure, quality and distribution of the population, and highlight the coordination of population with economy, society, resources and the environment. The long-term balanced population development requires closer integration of economic growth, respect to and protection of human rights, and promotion of gender equality and demographic issues. At the same time, efforts should be exerted to improve the health insurance system and facilitate equitable provision of basic public services with special attention paid to access of vulnerable groups to high-quality basic public services.

At the moment, the Chinese people are working strenuously towards the China Dream of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The core of the China Dream lies in advancement of the country, affluence of the people, good governance and sustainable development. Under this new context, the Chinese government will, as always, uphold the spirit and principles of the ICPD and its own integrated policy on population and development to meet challenges in the health sector, gradually adjust and improve its fertility policy, actively promote new-type urbanization and improve demographic structure and distribution. Meanwhile, our government will accelerate efforts to facilitate equitable provision of basic public services so that the goal of universal access to reproductive health and family planning services could be attained at a quicker pace. To safeguard and enhance people's livelihood, China will further reduce poverty, actively respond to population ageing and build up family capacity for development. International cooperation and exchanges will be further promoted in parallel with all these in a view to addressing global population and development issues with relentless efforts hand in hand with all national governments and the international community.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.