



**STATEMENT BY Dr. MARIAM JASHI**  
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**AT THE FORTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION**  
**AND DEVELOPMENT**

General debate on national experience in population matters: assessment of the status of implementation  
of the Programme of Action of the ICPD

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, let me thank the Secretary-General for his three reports to this important session of the Commission on Population and Development. We celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICPD with a comprehensive assessment of the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action as a critical opportunity to take stock of achievements, remaining challenges and to define a clear vision for future action.

In this connection, we wish to thank the UN System, that through UNFPA, worked closely with Member States to implement the global survey and regional reviews and to culminate the work in the “Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014”.

Hereby let me briefly present the status of ICPD implementation in Georgia and underline some of the key facilitating factors and barriers towards full-scale enactment of Cairo Programme of Action.

Over the last 20 years, Georgia, while going through socio-economic and political transition has still made significant progress vis-à-vis ICPD agenda:

- Cairo platform priorities across population development, reproductive health, women and youth empowerment, protection of displaced populations, enabling environment for children with disability and elderly have been reflected in national development plans and legislation.

- Historic gains were documented in reproductive health, including decreases in maternal (from 49.2 to 27.4), infant (from 21 to 12) and under-5 mortality rates (from 24.9 to 12.0) since 2000. Abortion rates have also decreased (from 3.7 to 1.6) with parallel increase in contraceptive prevalence rate (from 20% to 54%). Screening programs for breast and cervical cancer were introduced in 2005 and universal Access to HIV treatment has been maintained since 2003.
- Georgia introduced its flagship programme of Universal Health Care Programme. If in 2012, only half of the population was covered by public or private health insurance, today every citizen of the country is guaranteed with a basic package of health services and we are expecting substantial reduction of 70% out-of pocket payment documented in 2010.
- Expansion of social protection schemes provided better security net for socially vulnerable population groups, including families living under poverty, old-age pensioners, IDPs and people with disabilities. In 2013 old-age pensions and social allowances were increased from 2012 baselines by 50% and 100%, respectively.
- Women empowerment has been yet another priority positioned high on the national development agenda and Georgia surpassed a 10% threshold for women representation in the Parliament in 2012. Women hold key Ministerial portfolios in Justice, Education, Foreign Affairs and Environmental Protection, lead the National Security Council and the Central Election Committee. Economic empowerment of women has been also visible since 1994 with 30% of women being primary breadwinners and 20% heading business enterprises.
- Based on international assessment, Georgia has been categorized among the countries successful in combating trafficking, an achievement made under the leadership of the National Coordination Council Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Along with achievements the country continued to face critical barriers that made attainment of further progress unfeasible. At least 15% of the population is unemployed and ¼ of children continue to live in relative poverty. Georgia needs further investments for reducing current levels of maternal and child morbidity, for improving quality of health and social services for persons with disabilities, for ensuring better and sustainable housing for Internally Displaced Persons, for stronger political representation of women and for mainstreaming active aging policies in multi-sectoral planning.

While analyzing the achievements a number of cross-cutting factors became evident, and we believe that the same catalysts have to be taken into account in planning and implementation of post 2014 agenda.

- Positive results and trends are documented in areas where National Coordination Councils or equivalent inter-agency coordination mechanisms have worked. These mechanisms have ensured coherent advocacy and successful advancement of Gender Equality, Migration, Disability, Health and Trafficking agenda.
- Robustness of national strategic planning processes was critical in developing evidence-based and results-oriented strategies and effective alignment and harmonization of international aid, such as in the HIV/AIDS country response.
- Engagement of civil society partners, including religious groups, representatives of affected constituencies, academia and youth have played a critical role in consensus building and coordinated actions.
- Bi- and multi-lateral partnerships, including financial and technical assistance has ensured timely initiation of life-saving policies in communicable diseases such as Vaccine Preventable Diseases among children. Support from UN agencies and specifically UNFPA was determinant in strengthening national SRH response and generating data for decision making through three rounds of Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS).
- Finally, sustainability of the donor-supported programmes have been secured through Government investments in cancer screening, day care centers for children with disabilities, shelters for victims of domestic violence and other ICPD driven actions.

After two decades, Georgia remains not only committed to ICPD agenda, but supports a strong Outcome Document of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session as a positive reaffirmation of the Cairo Programme of Action. As articulated in meeting summary of the 2013 UNECE Regional Conference ("Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century"), we support Human Rights centered approach for post 2014 agenda for action. Furthermore, the experience clearly states that only comprehensive, results-oriented, rights- and evidence-based strategic planning process that engages all concerned stakeholders and focuses both on access to and quality of services can ensure progress towards equity, individual dignity, well-being and sustainable development of Nations.

I thank you.