



United Nations
Commission on Population and Development, 47th Session
7 – 11 April 2014

**Agenda item 4: General debate on national experience in population matters:
assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International
Conference on Population and Development.**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

On the eve of the 20 years mark of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the EU and its MS welcome this opportunity to review the progress of the implementation of the programme. The ICPD Programme of Action has made an enormous contribution in placing the enjoyment of human rights at the heart of development, including for women and girls, which is an absolute necessity for sustainable development and poverty eradication. Although progress has been achieved in maternal and child health and access to family planning and contraception, it has been insufficient, fragmented and uneven. For instance, 800 women still die every day from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth and new HIV/AIDS infections continue to rise, especially among young women.

The ICPD goals are paramount for all human beings. They are also reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals and are mutually supportive, not least as regards MDGs 3, 4 and 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction of child mortality and improvement of maternal health, including universal access to reproductive health. For this reason, the EU believes that the work of the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development and the Special Session of the 69th General Assembly are decisive for both the discussion on the unfinished business of the current MDGs and for the shaping of the post- 2015 Development Framework.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

outcomes of their review conferences and, in this context, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We welcome the General Assembly resolution 65/234 which extends the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 as many of the Goals and objectives will not have been met in time. We also welcome the decision on having the 48th Commission session in 2015 on the subject of *'Realizing the future we want: integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post- 2015 development agenda'*, as it is very relevant and timely before the adoption of the post 2015 development agenda.

Mr Chair,

We would like to congratulate the UNFPA for the very important and challenging work done in reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action. We especially welcome the UN global report on ICPD Beyond 2014 for its holistic approach, its strong focus on human rights and its extensive and evidence-based research, building on information collected on the ground. We thank the Secretary General and the Secretariat for the far-reaching preparatory work for this session of the CPD.

The findings of the Global Report show that the ICPD Programme of Action has significantly contributed to tangible progress; skilled birth attendance has increased by 15 per cent worldwide since 1990; more women have access to education, work and political participation; more children are going to school, and fewer adolescent girls are giving birth.

We are pleased to have contributed to these results, as the EU and its Member States are one of the world's largest actors in development cooperation. In developing countries, the EU has strongly promoted human rights and gender equality and women's empowerment as imperative for attaining tangible results, both in terms of legislation to strengthen women's rights, to give space and voice in political arenas and access to resources. The EU has also provided considerable support over the 20 year period covered by the ICPD PoA in basic areas such as education, health, clean drinking water and sanitation for millions of people.

The EU and its MS are also paying increased attention to the interrelationship between migration and development and consider migration both a significant factor contributing to the progress towards several MDGs and a key dimension of global population dynamics, with clear impacts on gender equality and access to health care. Well-managed migration can be an enabler for inclusive economic and social development, and a possible element of a renewed global partnership for development. At the same time, poorly managed migration can have serious detrimental effects on social and economic development. Better organizing legal migration and fostering well-managed mobility can act as powerful tools for reducing poverty and enhancing opportunities for individuals and the countries of origin, transit and destination.

Migration and mobility may pose challenges for managing urbanisation, but they are also vital for the functioning of cities as centres of growth, especially now that more than half of the world's population became urban. Urgent action is needed to avoid the increase of homeless and slum dwellers, addressing the specific problems of rapid urbanisation through actions aiming at increasing the capacity of local authorities to enhance the management of urban agglomerations through more participatory, sustainable and inclusive urban planning.

Mr Chair,

Despite the undeniable progress of the last 20 years, the UN Report also warns that the successes mentioned earlier are not reaching everyone equally. In the poorest communities, women and girl's socio-economic status, the discrimination and violence they are victims of, like , female genital mutilation and cutting child, early and forced marriage, as well as maternal death and many other concerns articulated by the ICPD have seen very little progress in the last 20 years, and, in fact, in some instances are getting worse.

The numbers we have in front of us still depict an alarming situation: About 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of female genital mutilations. One girl in nine marries before the age of 15. Many of them are forced into marriage and many become mothers by the age of 16. This has heavy consequences: pregnancy and child birth are the biggest causes of death amongst adolescent girls in developing countries.

In addition, globally, 123 million youth lack basic reading and writing skills: 61 per cent of them are young women. In the framework of the MDGs implementation, only 2 out of 130 countries have achieved equality between girls and boys at all levels of education.

And some of these numbers are increasing. This is unacceptable.

Also, persistent inequalities are faced by groups that are discriminated against on the basis of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, HIV status, marital status and sexual orientation or gender identity, including through the persistence of discriminatory laws, or the unfair and discriminatory application of laws.

Women continue to bear most of the unpaid care work. In many countries, gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work, social protection, inheritance, economic assets, productive resources and participation in decision making processes. Violence against women and girls continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals.

The report also brings to light another important population dynamic; ageing. In the past 20 years, the number of old persons increased by 56%, and in 2050 the population aged 60 and over is projected to reach 2 billion out an estimated total of about 9.6 billion. Aging represents a new reality and a challenge both for developed and developing countries, whose social and economic implications must be fully understood and properly addressed.

Mr Chair,

We now have the opportunity to change this. The EU and its MS are firmly committed to support the achievement of the ICPD, the Beijing platform, and achieving the MDGs by 2015. We need to focus our common effort and resources on areas and regions where progress has been slow, with a special attention to the least developed countries and fragile states, and where there is a risk of not achieving the established goals.

At the same time, the EU will continue to support the countries' efforts to ensure higher accountability systems as well as to strive for the definition of a more systematic framework for the monitoring of progress and achievements.

The European Union stands ready to contribute to an ambitious, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome of this session. Let's work together to build a new momentum for women and girls, men and boys worldwide.

I thank you.