

Turkey Delegations Statement to ICPD at International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports concerning the progress since Cairo. The 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development on ICPD is an opportunity to advance our efforts towards improving the quality of lives, with equity and dignity; and ensure sustained economic growth and development.

In this context, we also wish to thank the UNFPA for the report entitled “Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014”.

We welcome the report, which addresses the ways to enhance individual capabilities and resilience and ensure sustainable development in a comprehensive manner. We share the conclusion that investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across multiple sectors of the ICPD and throughout the life-course is the foundation of sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

Focusing on increasing wealth and income inequalities; issues related to gender equality and empowerment of women; the need for lifelong learning and building human capabilities especially for young people; addressing the inequalities in universal access to sexual and reproductive health services including through strengthening health systems both in rural and urban areas is important for a forward looking development policy. The increasingly diverse household structures and living arrangements require us to plan and build sustainable cities and strengthen urban-rural linkages. The impact of population dynamics on the micro and macro levels also require the integration of population dynamics into development planning at national, regional and international level.

Our development challenges require systematic participation and partnership of all stakeholders through the United Nations. Turkey notes in this regard the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action for the achievement of our national development priorities.

We know from our own national reviews the importance of building individual capability and resilience to ensure the well-being of all the people and achieve sustainable development at the global level

Mr. Chair,

We would like to reiterate our wholehearted support for the regional review in Geneva last year, which serves to facilitate more effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, but not to replace it. The ICPD has inspired principles, policies and programs in several countries and positively touched many lives. However, critical gaps in implementation remain. Taking this opportunity, I would like to stress upon some issues Turkey attaches particular importance to:

- First of all, ICPD spirit should be “**maintained**”.
- Women’s issues should continue to be more visible and should have high priority in the agenda. The independence and empowerment of women should not only be codified in laws, but ensured in practice as well. Sustainable development is not possible by overlooking gender equality or by denying 50% of the population.
- Inequalities in access to sexual and reproductive health and rights should be emphasized, whenever appropriate. Governments should advocate respect for women’s choices. Moreover, the prevention of unsafe abortions should be prioritized, due to its connection with maternal mortality.
- The ICPD’s focus on family planning as a human rights and the provision of respective services adequately. This should be emphasized in the post 2014 agenda as well.
- Improvements in women’s health must be celebrated; however it must not be forgotten that global and regional discrepancies, as well as gaps within countries remain.
- Harmful traditional practices and customs that lead to the violation of women’s rights should be reexamined and addressed, from a rights-based perspective.

Mr. Chair,

Finally, let me touch upon the latest improvements in Turkey regarding ICPD related issues:

- Significant reductions in maternal and infant mortality have been achieved, as well as improvements on reproductive health and rights. Enhancement of antenatal care and safe deliveries are just two examples. Family planning and the prevention of unsafe abortions have been prioritized, to decrease maternal mortality.
- During the last 10 years almost all gender discriminatory items from the legislative framework have been eliminated; and specific incentives on female

employment and education have been launched. Women's economic empowerment and work-family balance have been particular areas of focus.

- Turkey is combating the violence against women with the strategy of zero tolerance. We are the first country to ratify European Convention on violence against women which creates a comprehensive legal framework to protect women against all forms of violence.. The new National Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women has taken effect on 2012.
- Migration is a key issue related to population dynamics and it is important to focus on the development benefits it may have. Therefore promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of international migrants and asylums is one of our priority issues. We also would like to bring the issue of addressing international migration through increased international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and shared responsibility.
- Turkey has been very successful in controlling communicable diseases by its Primary Health Care System. Non-communicable diseases now become more prevalent as a consequence of rapid economic development and individual welfares. Therefore several major health promotion programs are running to overcome those problems as well those that involve tobacco control, fighting against obesity, cancer screening programs and preventing and controlling diabetes.
- Turkey has adopted the policy to eliminate all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriages through integrated multi-sectoral strategies and through the promulgation and enforcement of appropriate laws and ensuring their implementations.
- Building young people's capabilities to equip them with the skills to meet the labor demands of the current and emerging economies is a prerequisite for future sustainable development of the country. As such, youth is an area we prioritize.
- A population and civil registration system has been developed and enhanced.. Our last census was based on this system. Registration data of health related institutions is also developing and we have maternal deaths tracking system. Turkey has also realizing demographic and health surveys which is compatible with global DHS surveys by 5 year intervals since 1963.
- We are fully devoted to 2002 Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, an area that demands timely measures

- It is important to complement these policies by ensuring adequate social protection., such as improving access to basic needs, providing quality education at all levels, ensuring employment incentives for youth and women.

Mr. Chair,

We look forward to contributing to the negotiations on the post 2014 agenda. We expect that the outcome of the conference would recognize the outcomes of all the reviews, findings and recommendations of the ICPD beyond 2014.One final comment: In order to fully achieve the post 2014 agenda, **it is a must** to establish better collaboration and cooperation at the international and national levels as well as mechanisms for monitoring and follow ups, based on realistic goals and indicators.

Thank you for your attention.