

**Statement of the Mission of Malta to the United Nations
after the adoption of the resolution on the**

**“Assessment of the Status of Implementation of the Programme of Action of the
International Conference on Population and Development”**

**47th session of the Commission on Population and Development of the
United Nations Economic and Social Council**

New York, 12 April 2014

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to explain our position on the resolution just adopted by this Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

We recognise that this 47th Session of the Commission on Population and Development is commemorating the Twentieth Anniversary of the adoption of the ICPD and the Cairo Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Malta, like others, has made significant progress in its aim at fully implementing the ICPD. We would like to highlight some major points in this regard. As we have repeatedly stated at this Commission and elsewhere, Malta considers the induced termination of pregnancy as illegal, as stipulated under Chapter IX articles 241 to 243A of the Laws of Malta. We would like to recall that paragraph 8.25 of the ICPD clearly states that abortion should in no way be considered as a method of family planning, while also recalling that the letter and spirit of the ICPD is clear that the document seeks to eliminate the use of abortion through the availability and use of modern and effective methods of contraception.

Since 1994, Malta has taken decisive steps to provide unrestricted access to modern methods of contraception to all our population. Various modern methods of barrier, hormonal and mechanical contraceptives are widely available at every pharmacy and other retail locations. We do acknowledge that there is still much more to do, as is the situation in every other country, however at this stage we would like to recognise that we have made very significant and important progress in this regard.

Malta also takes very seriously its record in implementing internationally recognised human rights. To strengthen our national position in this regard, in the coming weeks, legislation introduced by the Government will enter into force legalising same-sex unions, thus ensuring that all population groups in Malta enjoy equal rights in all aspects of life.

Mr. Chairman,

Health issues are essential in population matters and in this regard we would like to highlight that Malta offers full and cost-free healthcare services to all its population, regardless of the type or complexity of healthcare required. This includes sexual and reproductive healthcare services, which are provided to all residents of Malta free of charge, and in full confidentiality regardless of age, sex, race or sexual orientation. In line with its respect for life from the moment of conception and its national legislation, abortion is the only service that is not provided.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to underline the importance of providing comprehensive sexuality education. It is essential that young people are able to understand changes in their bodies in an educated way, so that they will have the necessary knowledge and aptitude to make and take the right decisions

regarding their sexuality. In line with our belief that education is a main pillar for true achievement of sexual and reproductive health, as recent as February 2014, the Government of Malta updated its guidelines on sexuality education, for all schools throughout the country.

Mr. Chairman,

In this regard, Malta is therefore convinced that its continued implementation of the ICPD conforms to the letter and spirit of what was agreed by all of us twenty years ago in Cairo, an agreement which we have just reaffirmed.

We request that this statement is registered and recorded in the records of this meeting.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.