



Permanent Mission
of Germany
to the United Nations
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Statement

by

**Ambassador Heiko Thoms
Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany
to the United Nations**

at the

**48th Session of the
Commission on Population and Development**

on

**Actions for the further implementation of the
Programme of Action of the International Conference
on Population and Development
(Item 3)**

13 April 2015

(check against delivery)

Statement by Ambassador Thoms at the 48th Session of the Commission on Population and Development on Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Item 3), 13 April 2015

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Madam Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Germany welcomes the theme of this year's debate ["Realizing the future we want: Integrating population issues into sustainable development, including the Post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development"].

Let me first of all thank the Secretary-General as well as UNFPA for the very comprehensive and insightful reports to the Commission.

This year marks an important milestone: In September, we will adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda that will determine our continued efforts for achieving sustainable development for all, realizing gender equality and ensuring a good and healthy life for everyone.

Madam Chair,

Population dynamics is an issue of crucial importance for the world's future. Demographic megatrends, such as population growth, aging, urbanization and migration will have a huge impact on successful poverty eradication and all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

These issues have also been discussed twenty one years ago, in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo where Member States adopted the forward-looking Programme of Action. The agenda of the ICPD is broad, encompassing all issues within the range of population and development, yet it places specific importance on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all.

Germany reaffirms its strong support and commitment to the Programme of Action, as well as to the Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action. With these two forward-looking documents, the international community committed itself to promoting and protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights more strongly.

Madam Chair,

The ICPD Review Process that concluded last year with the Special Session of the General Assembly provided strong evidence of the continued relevance of the Programme of Action and has also shown the gaps and challenges ahead of us:

The improvements in maternal mortality and access to contraceptives have only been modest. Approximately 800 women still die in childbirth every day. Maternal mortality is a tragic reality and particularly high among young women, with pregnancy and childbirth being the leading cause of death amongst adolescent girls in developing countries. Furthermore, approximately 225 million women still don't have access to modern contraceptives, 90% of them living in developing countries.

Therefore, It is important to realize the full implementation of the Programme of Action as well as the recommendations of the Review Process in order to counter these challenges.

Madam Chair,

Realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups, in particular youth, is one of the priorities of German development cooperation in the area of health and population policy. We consider sexual and reproductive health and rights a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Therefore, we strongly advocate for a rights-based and gender sensitive approach in family planning, comprehensive sexuality education as well as linking of HIV/ AIDS and sexual and reproductive health strategies. Women and girls, like men and boys, must have full and affordable access to sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies, information and education and be able to freely and responsibly decide on matters related to their sexuality free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Comprehensive sexuality education is essential to enable young people to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, HIV, and sexually transmitted infections. Germany therefore supports the Eastern and Southern Africa Initiative on HIV Prevention and Sexual Health for Young People to which 20 countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa region have affirmed their commitment. The goal of this initiative is to promote access to quality comprehensive sexuality education as well as sexual and reproductive health services for young people in the region.

Moreover, in November 2014, representatives of governments, civil society and the private sector gathered at the 12th International Dialogue for Population and Sustainable Development in Berlin which was hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic

Cooperation and Development. The outcome of this conference was the “Berlin Call to Action” that calls for sexual and reproductive health and rights to be adequately reflected in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Madam Chair,

Finally, Germany would also like to stress the importance of the collection and analysis of population data. Efforts to meet people’s needs and further improve their lives today and at the same time safeguard the prospects of future generations must take into account how and where many people will be living, what their age, their gender, their education and their vulnerabilities and capacities will be, whether they are rich or poor.

Therefore, we support our partner countries in collecting and analyzing the demographic data they require for the design of their health, education, and labor market policies. This allows them also to make better use of available resources, to address the risks and to seize the opportunities of their demographic trends.

Madam Chair,

To conclude, Germany remains committed to preserving the principles of the Cairo Conference and calls upon all development partners and Member States to support the further implementation of the Cairo Plan of Action beyond 2014.

Thank you for your kind attention.