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**Programmes and Innovations to Strengthen the Demographic
Evidence Base for Implementation of the ICPD POA and the
2030 Agenda**

TALKING POINTS

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Introduction

Your Excellency Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bola, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and Chairperson of the Commission on Population and Development, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen.....

On behalf of UNFPA, I would like to thank you for your leadership of the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development, in preparing for this important gathering, and all the delegates for your important work to advance the fulfillment of the ICPD Programme of Action.

This week we are focused on the role of demographic data in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the ICPD Programme of Action.

I intend to give you six perspectives, including the way forward as conclusion

1 Let me start by looking at the Synergies between the ICPD POA and the 2030 Agenda

At the outset, let me highlight important synergies in the vision and values of the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda. People are at the center of both agendas, and each characterizes a vision of sustainable development that is based on the achievement of universal human rights and equality, sexual and

reproductive health, gender equality and women's empowerment, education, security of place, economic growth, and the dignity of all persons.

The 1994 Programme of Action underscored our shared belief that development is the expansion of human opportunity and freedom. It spoke to the importance of investing in the capabilities and the potential of all persons, and advancing their rights to contribute to society.

The high priority placed on **equality** within the 2030 Agenda is an ambition not only shared with the ICPD Programme of Action – but the reaffirmation of a vision of sustainable development that is central to both of these agendas.

The idea that strong national systems of population data are necessary to advance equality also echoes the Programme of Action [and its reviews.] A valuable output of the 2014 review of ICPD was the finding that progress towards the fulfilment of the 1994 Programme of Action had been unequal and fragmented, and far too many inequalities in health, education, employment and opportunity had persisted or worsened since the 1990s, reinforcing the importance of equality in our commitments today.

And let us be candid that redressing inequalities, and leaving no one behind, places very high demands on the national data ecosystem of each and every country. Why? Because such an ambition suggests that every country is able to identify and locate those people most vulnerable – whether to poverty, ill

health, or discrimination – to identify the most effective interventions to improve their welfare, and monitor progress across many different targets.

Many developing countries will face steep challenges in accomplishing such work. They lack core demographic data, routine national data systems are under-developed, or there is limited capacity to use data for national development. And these shortfalls mean that partnerships, and networks of collaboration, will be essential to success.

2 The second point is touching on highlights of the Evaluation undertaken by UNFPA on the 2010 Round of census

A recent evaluation of the 2010 round of census by UNFPA – [*presented in a side-event on Tuesday*] – offers a valuable illustration of such shortfalls in many countries.

In the 2010 round UNFPA provided technical/financial support for census to 135 countries – working closely with many of our UN partners – and relying on UNSD guidelines for census operations.

And while the evaluation finds that support for census operations was strong, the applications of new technologies has been expanding, and dissemination improved over the 2000 round, they conclude that **use** of census data remains limited by all actors – including governments and civil society. Even use of census for planning schools and public infrastructure has been under utilized – wasting critical data for development.

This shortfall in the use of census data extends to all sources of population data – and it underscores one of our greater challenges. It includes the under-use of civil registration, the health sector and education data, other administrative data, and even periodic household surveys such as the (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) MICS or (Demographic and Health Survey) DHS. In each case, the shortfall in national use reflects the widespread need for deeper and more sustainable investments in human capital – in people and institutions with data expertise.

Human resources temporarily expand to run a census, or a DHS - but then they contract –and there is little sustainable demographic or statistical capacity left behind to ensure that governments, civil society or the private sector have the person-power to make use of the findings to build a 21st century knowledge economy. This message – the need for deeper investments in people and institutions – must be central to our vision going forward.

In the first point, I ended mentioning the necessary partnerships to respond to SDGs data needs. Under this second point, let me call for increased statistical literacy for effective and efficient use of existing data.

Despite these shortfalls – there are also innovations underway across many countries – that give lessons on the power of collaborations and networks to advance national capacity.

3 My third point speaks to the Demographic Dividend

... which has prompted rising interest in the integrated use of data and population analysis across many countries.

In more than 14 countries of Africa alone, UNFPA with partners from other UN agencies, the World Bank, international and regional NGOs and academics, has supported national reviews of population age structures, and mapping critical investments needed for human capital development: child marriage, women's empowerment and gender equality, unmet demand for family planning, education, and decent employment -

In some countries this has included sub-national analyses, illustrating where empowerment is falling short – for example, where child marriage or maternal death are highest, where school attendance of girls demands acute attention, and where the proportion of young people not in school or employment is most serious.

Data and mapping of such needs offers countries not only critical advocacy tools for needed investments, but it offers a thematic focus for national monitoring of indicators that advance prospects for a demographic dividend, through fulfillment of indicators that speak to the fulfillment of both ICPD and the 2030 Agenda.

This bridges to the fourth point which is about:

4 Measuring Other Subnational Inequalities

Measuring and addressing inequalities is becoming easier for everyone, as mapping tools are expanding widely, and data is ever more available as visual displays – even on smart phones.

Sub-national development maps offer governments and partners some of the clearest information about where investments should be targeted for the biggest impact, and where compound inequalities are leading to the most concerning marginalization and vulnerability.

For example – the Zambian government and UNFPA have been working together to identify where girls are at the greatest risk for child marriage. Analysis has underscored 2 major overlapping risks for girls age 10-17: whether they live with neither parent nor a mother only; and if they are from the poorest 40% of households. By mapping these overlapping risks across all districts of the country, the Government has been able to know in which districts social protection investments for girls are most needed, to address child marriage. These types of simple population analysis and mapping exercises can allow investments to **reach first - those with the greatest need**. This is all about the 2030 Development Agenda of Leave No One Behind.

Looking at a different type of risk, the government of Indonesia and UNFPA are generating similar sub-national maps to highlight neighborhoods where there is both a high risk of flooding, and a high concentration of older people

– a potent combination of vulnerabilities that demands pro-active planning, and can direct evacuation efforts when flooding risks arise.

5 Big Data

Emerging innovations – such as big data – offer promise for some of the toughest data needs we have. These include locating people during or after humanitarian crises, or helping government to estimate the size and location of their population after sustained periods of conflict and displacement.

Tracking cell phone towers receiving the greatest traffic – as Flowminder showed after the Haiti earthquake – can provide real-time data about mass movements of the population, and direct relief to where people are heading to escape a crisis. In a related effort in Afghanistan, where there has not been a formal census since 1979 – Flowminder, UNFPA and the Afghan government are sharing and combining survey data and satellite images to estimate a long overdue census of the population, to support the restoration of development planning and investment.

From the above five quick perspectives, I would like to conclude as a way forward.

6 Looking forward

The tasks ahead are large, and the coming push for a data revolution will only be successful if it assures strong national data ecosystems within each country, with institutional capacity to use and integrate diverse types and sources of population data.

As we collectively invest in core population data such as civil registration and vital statistics, in the 2020 Census Round, household surveys, and registry data – we must pursue all possible synergies between our efforts – and give the highest priority to building ***national capacity*** for using such data for development...

To achieve these aims, countries will need to:

- **raise the political priority** of national statistical systems to implement and monitor the ICPD and SDG agendas;
- prioritize **long-term growth of institutions**, including a **new generation of population data experts**; and
- develop strategies for data collection, especially for the 2020 census round, that are **embedded within shared efforts to improve the use** of such data by governments and civil society to advance human rights and equality.

This calls for placing the highest priority on shared work, on brokering south-south partnerships, on new centres of excellence and regional hubs of expertise, and synergies across data-related thematic investments – such as the health data collective, and the demographic dividend, among others.

Our focus today is on data for the SDGs, and appropriately so – But it falls to this Commission – and your deliberations and commitments this week - to seize the momentum of the 2030 Agenda to build the strong national data systems that are no less essential to the fulfillment of all development aspirations, including **the ICPD Programme of Action.**

I wish you a successful week. Merci Beaucoup