



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

327 East 58th Street, New York, NY 10022
TEL: (212) 336-0777 FAX: (212) 759-7672



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Statement

by

H.E. Mr. RY TUY

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations**

**50th Session of the
Commission on Population and Development**

New York, 3 - 7 April 2017

Madam Chair,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

First of all, Cambodia aligns itself with the statements made by Ecuador, on behalf of G-77 and China and Bangladesh on behalf of LDCs respectively. Cambodia welcomes the reports by the Secretary-General, which will form the basis for discussions at this important event. The Cambodian Delegation considers this Session as an opportunity to share our national achievements since we recovered in 1993 from years of instability and civil strife. We have made considerable progress since affirming our commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, especially in the area of maternal mortality reduction, fertility decline, gender equality and containment of the spread of HIV. This Session also provides us an opportunity to reaffirm our continued efforts to improve the lives of our people with equity and dignity in the years to come and to ensure sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

We wish to thank the UN System which, through the leadership of the UNFPA, worked closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia on reviewing and updating the National Population Policy in which the “Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014” has been fully incorporated for further implementation in its rollout action plan.

In the very context of the 50th Session of the CPD and in view of the critical importance of the three reports, the Royal Government of Cambodia:

- *Recognizes* that changing population age structure driven by declining fertility and reinforced by continued declines in mortality and accompanied by increased investments in education, health and opportunities for young people is central to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and attainment of sustainable development, and urges states to focus on individual life transitions to achieve their full potential over the course of demographic transitions;
- *Welcomes* governments’ efforts to advance progress on sustainable development through demographic dividends, which offer a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in empowerment, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, education and employment, linked to age structure;
- *Underscores* that investments and interventions in the area of population and development, including access to sexual and reproductive health, are essential for eliminating major barriers to poverty reduction and prosperity and that without these investments and interventions, individuals, communities and societies will be haunted by lost lives, health, capabilities, productivity and prosperity;
- *Stresses* that the entry into adolescence marks a critical time, especially for girls, which has too often been neglected and that with expanded investments in empowerment, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and high quality education at this critical juncture have lifelong impacts whose effect is to lead in a surge of human capital into society and sustainable development;
- *Noting* that with increased population mobility and urbanization as well as fewer intergenerational households, countries are seeing household-based social supports grow more challenging, stresses the need for poverty-reduction and social protection programmes and strategies to address the concerns for older persons especially as societies age and older persons live longer and healthier.

- *Recognizes* that the chance for millions of girls worldwide to realize their potential and contribute to development is derailed by child, early and forced marriage, unplanned pregnancies or poor access to health care, with spiraling impacts on educational attainment and labor force participation, and stresses that the hallmark of programmatic work on age structure and the demographic dividend involves investments in sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as a means of increasing the empowerment of women and girls and their ability to stay in school and pursue decent work;
- *Recognizes* that globally, more than 15 million girls aged 15-19 give birth every year, and that pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 in low income countries, with 19 percent of young women in developing countries becoming pregnant before age 18 and adolescent girls and young women accounting for 40 percent of all unsafe abortions worldwide, with 2.5 million unsafe abortions occurring every year among this age group.
- *Acknowledges* that the fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights is essential for the health of women and girls, for their lifelong prospects and well-being, and for their ability to contribute fully, at all ages, to sustainable development and in this regard urges life-long health education to begin with young people, both within the school curricula and in concert with comprehensive sexuality education, as many life habits that affect long term consequences are initiated and formed at young ages and are intertwined with aspects of identity formation and aspirations for adulthood.
- *Recognizes* that the field of population and development and the Programme of Action of the ICPD have been major drivers of expanding data systems and strengthening the evidence-base for decision making and that further recognizes that at the center of the 2030 Agenda and its indicator framework is the need to significantly expand the effective use of national and sub-national population data, urges states to make use of core demographic data such as census and civil registration and vital statistics, and household surveys in situation analysis and decision-making.
- *Acknowledges* that age structure has important implications for climate-related vulnerabilities and resilience of societies, both nationally and locally, particularly on children and older persons and has become part of how countries diagnose and address a wide range of risks.
- *Noting* that it likely that countries will never again be more diverse in their age structure than over the course of the 2030 Agenda, *urges* countries to have good census data, sound demographic projections and analysis, based on the understanding of their age structure, and to tailor contextually specific policies and programmes, to leave no one behind now and in future.
- *Recalls* the second pathway to sustainability as identified in the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions which is investment in lifelong health and education, especially for young people and sustained across the life course and that the outcomes of policies and programmes during periods of young age structure greatly influence long term development trajectories, including as countries experience ageing.
- *Recognizes* that age structure change reflects great achievements, including broader access to education, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health, and reductions in mortality among children, mothers and older persons and that the cost of inaction, and of not accounting for and adapting to age structure changes, may exacerbate existing gaps in development of people produce long term legacies of missed human capabilities and lost chances for development.

Upon substantial declines in fertility and mortality, Cambodia is going through a phase of rapid demographic transition. This has opened up a demographic window of opportunity characterized by a declining dependency ratio. The size of the labour force is expanding with the entry of a large number of working age youth. This, backed up by appropriate policies in all sectors, has a great potential to provide the country with a large demographic dividend through further economic development. Recognizing the impacts of population dynamics, reproductive health and gender on poverty, the Royal Government of Cambodia will strive further to improve the standard of living of its people. It will continue to reinforce the integration of the population and development agenda in a broad-based development process. The next five-year National Strategic Development Plan will be formulated to respond to new challenges pertaining to population and development in relation to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, with emphasis on changing age structures and sustainable development, focusing on the following priorities:

- (i) increasing national wealth distribution and reducing income inequalities;
- (ii) Further strengthening institutional capacity and governance, at both national and sub-national levels, and ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of public services to better serve people; in particular the most vulnerable population
- (iii) building a strong human capital in the country, especially for young people;
- (iv) strengthening the health system in both rural and urban areas;
- (v) addressing unfulfilled gender equality and empowerment of women; and
- (vi) addressing the inequalities in universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for women and young people; and
- (vii) population ageing.

We, therefore, welcome and support the reports of the Secretary-General, particularly the report on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We are pleased to note that all the reports address in a comprehensive manner, ways to enhance individual capabilities and resilience and ensure sustainable development for the Cambodian people. We agree with the conclusion of the report that investing in human capital across the multiple segments of the ICPD and recognizing individual human rights and choices provide the foundations for sustainable development of a country.

To conclude, Cambodia wishes to reaffirm its support for further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, already expressed in the Country Statement on the occasion of the 47th Session of the Commission on Population and Development. The Royal Government of Cambodia supports a continuous and more effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the coming years.

Thank you for your attention.