

**50th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development
Statement by Denmark, 4 April 2017
Statement by Ambassador Ib Petersen
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Chair, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Denmark takes this opportunity to thank the Bureau with Qatar as its able chair, the UNFPA and UNDESA for all the work that has gone into preparing this 50th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals – the SDGS - are the overall defining framework for our work in this year's session on the Commission on population and development. The SDGs embody real promises for the future of people in all stages of life across the globe. Promises for the largest youth generation ever: Promises for the young girl, who has an unfulfilled right to get a quality education, and for the millions of women and girls still without access to modern contraception family planning and proper health care. Promises to **leave no one behind**.

These promises can only be fulfilled if the needs and rights of all people - not least those of young people - to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and services alongside access to quality education, including comprehensive sexual education, decent jobs and inclusion in society are met. Access to safe abortion and post abortion care

is critical. Far too many women and teenage girls die from unsafe abortion, very often from unwanted pregnancies.

This year's Commission rightfully draws our attention to the pertinent theme of changing age structures and sustainable development. We regret, however, that only few of the important evidence-based inputs from the Secretary General's report E/CN.9/2017/3 found their way to become reflected in the zero-draft.

Building on the evidence found in this Secretary General's report, it will be crucial to comprehend the global population trends and consequently turn the perspective away from seeing only challenges towards creating opportunities and using these in terms of meeting the SDGs. This will require sound investments in a broad range of social and economic public policies that - in a human rights based manner - ensure, amongst other things, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, especially for girls, and employment opportunities in order to make sure that the demographic dividend will indeed be reaped.

Such investments will - in the countries, where this is relevant - enable the utilisation of the positive effect, which it has on economic productivity when the workforce consists of an increasing number of young people and, at the same time, a declining share of the population is dependent on support.

Without these investments and interventions, individuals, communities and societies will be marked by lost lives, health, productivity and prosperity. As populations age and lifespans get longer – a triumph of development – keeping people across generations prosperous and out of poverty will require new, lifelong investments and strong social protection systems.

We must as the basis for this remember that people of all ages are human rights holders and equally valuable members of society.

‘Leaving no one behind’ is at the core of the ICPD agenda which encompasses and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable, marginalized and stigmatized population groups. Those we want to make sure are not left behind. The ICPD Programme of Action, the key actions for its follow-up and the outcomes of its review conferences thus remains as relevant today as it was in 1994.

The Danish Government remains committed to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, the key actions for its follow-up conferences and the outcomes of its review conferences. We are furthermore firmly committed to use the 2030 agenda to push for sustainable societies with growth where everybody will have the opportunity to determine their own destinies, make their own choices and live the life they want - **leaving no one behind.**

As a contribution Denmark will maintain its long-standing, politically broad tradition of fulfilling the UN goal that the world's rich countries should reach minimum 0.7 percent of the gross national income allocated to development assistance. As one of very few countries in the world, Denmark has done so since 1978, and we will continue to do so.

Thank you for your attention!