

## **Pakistan Statement**

We would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election to the 50th session of the Commission on population and Development. We welcome the theme of the session, *"Changing population age structures and sustainable development"*. We are aware of the fact that the demographic changes relating to population age structures are key factors that impact not only the development opportunities but also the development strategies. Pakistan has witnessed a unique transition in the age structures of its population which has significant implications for the current and future development of Pakistan and its ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. This statement aims to highlight some of the policies and initiatives adopted by our country to meet the socio-economic challenges that may arise as a result of changing population age structures in Pakistan.

2. Pakistan continues to be the sixth most populated country in the world with an estimated population of 195.4 million having a large size of population of working age group. The population growth rate is 1.89 which has come down from 1.92 percent in 2015. Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is estimated as 3.1 children per women. In Pakistan 60.4 percent of population is between the ages of 15 to 64 years. This is an important segment of population as it is working age group or net producer. On the other hand the dependent population which includes children under the age of 15 years is 35.4 percent and people above 65 years are 4.2 percent.

3. This higher percentage of working age group can play very important role in the economic growth and development provided they are properly educated and imparted with vocational training. Whereas, the dependent age group also needs special care in terms of immunization programmes, nutrition policies, recreational facilities, and educational institutions for children and medical care facilities for old age people.

4. Pakistan hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world. The number of emigrant has increased from 0.75 million in 2014 to 0.946 million in 2015 which include 0.372 million unskilled, 0.397 million skilled, 0.15 million semi skilled workers. Dramatic social changes have led to rapid urbanization and the emergence of mega-cities in Pakistan. During 1990–2003, Pakistan sustained its historical lead as the second-most urbanized nation in South Asia with city dwellers making up 36% of its population. At present, 50% of Pakistanis reside in towns of 5,000 people or more.

5. Keeping in view the changing population age structures, various policies have been designed and initiatives have been taken in order to improve access to education, health care facilities and economic opportunities of various segments of the population of Pakistan. Some of these are:

- Pakistan has crafted Vision 2025 which is people centered and considers human resource as an asset for growth and development. Pakistan's 110 million youth below the age of 30 provide great potential for growth and development. The leading priority is to harness their potential and tap their latent for making them effective managers of change for tomorrow.
- The Vision 2025 aims to regain macroeconomic stability and implement wide-ranging reforms. It focuses on developing the infrastructure, restructure the economy and provide understanding towards the country's long term development agenda including the SDGs.
- Public health spending provides an important insight on a country's health progress. Pakistan has an increase of 17.2 percent in public health spending in comparison to last year. The federal government recently initiated several programmes to meet the needs of health, including National Health Insurance Scheme, Drug Pricing Policy and Compulsory Polio Vaccination Policy across the country.
- Prime Minister's National Health Program is another milestone towards social welfare reforms; ensuring that the identified underprivileged citizens across the country get access to their entitled medical health care in a swift and dignified manner without any financial obligations.
- After devolution, population programs have been shifted to the provinces, which have framed their Population Policies focused on the expansion of service delivery network and improvement of quality of care.
- The Government has initiated strategic review of National Population Policy, so as to reframe it to achieve SDGs and FP2020 Commitments which include raising Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) from 35 percent to 50 percent by 2020.

- The Government has included Contraceptive services in the essential service package of provinces. Supply chain management, training and communication campaigns are being strengthened. Family planning has been made a priority for LHWs, who cover 70 percent of rural areas. The overall expenditures under population planning has increased by 10.6 percent from Rs. 12609 million in 2014 to Rs. 13943 million in 2015.
- Pakistan's Education Vision-2025 aims at significant expansion in educational coverage, and improvements in the quality of education. The Education vision-2025 aspires at increasing public expenditure from the current 2.2 to 4.0 percent of GDP by 2018 with specific focus on increasing Primary education to 100% and overall literacy rate to 90% by 2025. It also focuses on improving Primary and Secondary Gender Parity Index to 1, and increasing female workforce participation rate from 24% to 45% by 2025.
- The government has provided an option to the youth to set up their own enterprises through Prime Minister's Small Business and Interest Free loan Schemes and disbursed Rs. 7102.49 million and Rs. 3147.3 million respectively.
- The government is focusing on enhancing research capabilities of university students and has distributed 100,000 laptops in phase-I.
- Youth Skills Development Scheme is focused on imparting skills to the university graduates through training in different public and private organizations. The interns are paid handsome stipend.
- Benazir Income Support Program is continuing to eradicate extreme poverty through provision of cash transfers. The budgetary allocation to the program enhanced from Rs. 97 billion in FY2015 to Rs. 102 billion for FY2016. So far, BISP has achieved all the targets set under IMF's Extended Fund Facility which has been acknowledged by IMF in eleventh review meeting held in May 2016.
- Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) also provides assistance in microcredit, water and infrastructure, drought mitigation, education, health and emergency response interventions. During last year, an amount of Rs.11.96 billion has been spent for core interventions administered under various operational units.

- We acknowledge the importance of women empowerment as a right and as a development strategy. Therefore, the federal and provincial governments have taken various initiatives for welfare and empowerment of women, which include: increased quota in civil services, anti-harassment bills at workplace, Women's Ombudsperson offices, women protection bills, shelter homes, anti-child marriage bills, allotment of agri-land to landless women tenants, Micro-Financing Schemes for Women.
- Under the Youth Business Loan Scheme, 50 percent of loans are reserved for female. Women will be trained in vocational skills through the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Scheme. The government has allocated Rs. 800 million for this scheme.
- Pakistan has established the Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution that offers a varied number of schemes such as old-age pension, disability pension, old-age grant and survivor's pension.

### **Way Forward**

- The government of Pakistan intends to develop strong MIS system based on census 2017 data for policy makers from public, private and CSOs for effective planning and strategies for all age groups to achieve the targets of politico-socio-economic development.
- With a vision of using the potential of working age population, the government of Pakistan is determined to investing in education and vocational skills of the youth with particular focus on women's economic empowerment.
- Government of Pakistan is determined to investing more resources for improving population and health indicators.