

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**  
**Coordination and Management Meeting**

**New York, 6 – 7 July 2017**

***Item 18: Economic and environmental questions***

**(f) Population and development**

*Presentation on the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development*

*(E/2017/25)*

**Ambassador Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**  
**Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, and**  
**Chair of the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Distinguished representatives of the Secretariat and of the  
United Nations Population Fund,  
Colleagues and friends,

- I am honoured to present to you the outcome of the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development, as contained in document E/2017/25.
- The 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development was held at United Nations Headquarters on 15 April 2016 and from 3 to 7 April 2017.<sup>1</sup> The session had a special theme of “Changing population age structures and sustainable development”.
- This theme provided an occasion for the Commission to focus on Chapter VI of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which focuses on population growth and structure. This led to lively and in-depth discussions about a topic that was central to the deliberations in the Cairo conference in 1994.

---

<sup>1</sup> An initial meeting was held on 15 April 2016 for the sole purpose of electing members of the Bureau.

- Various speakers pointed toward the long-term changes taking place in the age distribution of the human population and to the impacts of such changes on various aspects of sustainable development. There was broad consensus on the importance of taking these demographic shifts into account as Member States seek to implement the 2030 Agenda.
- During the session, delegations interacted with invited speakers and experts and with representatives of non-governmental organizations. For the first time in this Commission, Member States shared their own experiences of implementation in a segment featuring “national voluntary presentations”.
- Despite extensive informal consultations, Member States did not reach consensus on all issues addressed in a draft resolution on the special theme of the 50<sup>th</sup> session. In the end, I withdrew my proposed text and received authorization from the Commission to prepare a summary of the deliberations on the draft resolution. That summary is contained in the report of the session being presented here today.
- This year’s session also presented an opportunity for Member States to follow up on the Council’s 2016 resolution on the Commission’s methods of work and to put forward, for the Council’s consideration, two draft decisions on aspects of this topic that require further clarification. The two decisions concern the Commission’s multi-year work programme and the report of the Secretary-General on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
- In addition, the Commission adopted a decision on special themes for its 51<sup>st</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> sessions in 2018 and 2019.
- This year’s session of the Commission was well attended. Participants included delegations from all 46 elected members of the Commission, as well as observers from about 70 other Member States, two non-Member States, and several intergovernmental organizations and entities of the United Nations system. Roughly 160 representatives from more than 65 non-governmental organizations participated as well.
- An overview of the deliberations and of the substantive documents that helped to inform the discussion are contained in the summary of the report on the 50<sup>th</sup>

session, which has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

- The Commission on Population and Development recommends to the Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:
  - First, a decision to take note of the report on its 50<sup>th</sup> session; and
  - Second, a decision to approve the provisional agenda for its 51<sup>st</sup> session.
- The Commission also recommends to the Council the adoption of a draft decision regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
- In addition, the Commission recommends to the Council the adoption of a draft decision on its multi-year work programme, including the cycle for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
- These draft decisions are proposals for action by the Council.
- Furthermore, I bring to the attention of the Council two decisions adopted by the Commission in its April session:
  - First, a decision on special themes for the Commission's 51<sup>st</sup> session in 2018 ("Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration") and for its 52<sup>nd</sup> session in 2019 ("Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development").
  - Second, a decision taking note of two documents considered by the Commission:
    - a. Report of the Secretary-General on "Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2016: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs"; and

b. Note by the Secretariat on the draft programme of work of the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for the period 2018-2019.

- These decisions are brought to the attention of the Council for information.
- Lastly, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the Chair's summary of the discussion on the draft resolution on the special theme, as contained in the report on the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission.

Madame Chair,  
Distinguished delegates,

- The 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development was in many ways a forward-looking and important session.
- We reviewed the latest evidence regarding the profound changes taking place in the age distribution of the human population. While acknowledging that the transition towards longer lives and smaller families appears to be universal, the discussion emphasized that the speed and timing of these changes vary greatly across countries and regions.
- Moreover, these demographic shifts are influenced by various social and economic factors. They will have major implications for sustainable development and must be part of our planning as we seek to implement the 2030 Agenda.
- Governments and other stakeholders discussed policies to address the challenges and to benefit from the opportunities presented by changing population age structures.
- With one of the draft decisions put forward to the Council, the Commission took an important step toward establishing a four-year cycle for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as part of a multi-year work programme aligned with the work of the Council and its high-level political forum as it reviews progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Commission also decided on special themes for its next two sessions.

- These actions are forward-looking and will allow the Commission to continue to assess progress toward the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and to contribute to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.
- Regarding the Commission's failure to achieve consensus on a draft resolution on this year's special theme, I share the concern of many delegations that this has happened now twice in the past three years.
- I call on Member States to continue to engage in discussions on the important topics that have been part of the debates of this Commission since its first session in 1947. We must open our hearts and minds and strive even harder to find consensus on these topics in our future deliberations. My country stands ready to support the Chair and the Bureau of the 51<sup>st</sup> session and to work with other Member States to reach consensus next April.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- I wish to thank the Economic and Social Council for supporting the work of the Commission on Population and Development by taking note of the report on its 50<sup>th</sup> session. I request your support also in endorsing the draft proposals presented in that report.
- I would like also to thank my colleagues in the Bureau, the Vice-Chairs of the 50<sup>th</sup> session: Ambassador Lewis G. Brown of Liberia, Ms. Cristina Popescu of Romania, Ms. Nicola Barker-Murphy of Jamaica and Ms. Eleonora van Munster of the Netherlands.
- I thank Ms. Barker-Murphy and Ms. von Munster for serving as co-facilitators of the negotiations on the draft resolution on the special theme, and Ms. Popescu for her contribution as rapporteur of the session.
- A special word of thanks goes to Mr. Mustapha Kamal Rosdi of Malaysia, who stepped in on short notice to serve as facilitator of the consultations on the draft decisions regarding the Commission's methods of work.
- I would also like to thank our colleagues from the Secretariat, in both DESA and DGACM, and from UNFPA for their continuous support throughout the 50<sup>th</sup> session.

- In conclusion, I offer my best wishes to the Chair of the 51<sup>st</sup> session, H.E. Dr. Ion Jinga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations. I also wish to welcome the incoming Vice-Chairs.
- I hope that the new Bureau will carry forward the important work of the Commission on Population and Development. I call on all members of the Commission, as well as Member States who are not currently members, to give the new Chair and Bureau your full support throughout the 51<sup>st</sup> session.

Thank you, and best wishes to the Council in your deliberations.