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Statement

By

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**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

The delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia highly appreciate this opportunity to address the 51st Session of the Commission on Population and Development, and to comment on the three themes under consideration, Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility, and International Migration, which draw our attention to a more complex future faced by our world in terms of population movement and sustainable development.

Cambodia's demographics, in part a product of our solid progress made over the last two decades, is in a state of flux. Although our population of some 16 million continues to grow, the rate of growth has levelled off markedly and we are seeing deep and unprecedented changes in family structure and fertility.

Rapid and complex changes are also taking place at subnational level - with varying regional population dynamics, and growing internal migration flows. Until very recently rural-rural movements have been dominant, followed by remarkable rural-urban population shifts, especially to our Capital city, Phnom Penh. An additional dynamic has been the relatively-high level of cross-border migration.

In the light of this, the Royal Government of Cambodia recognises the priority of responding to demographic changes, and has integrated population dynamics in national development planning by reviewing and developing a number of national population-centered policies namely the National Population Policy, the National Policy for Youth Development, the National Ageing Policy taking into account national priorities and international challenges affecting the local context. Moreover, Cambodia has emphasised the issue of migration and urbanisation management in its second National Population Policy, 2016-2030, and a number of initiatives are underway within the context of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, to protect vulnerable population living in urban areas and to ensure that they can have access to basic services. This framework offers a comprehensive policy road map and is underpinned by respect for the rights of citizens to make free reproductive and locational choices, and to have access to information and services like adolescent sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexual education (CSE).

Turning to the three core themes under consideration, Cambodia:

1. *Recognises* the importance of polices to support **sustainable cities**, via effective provision of infrastructures, alongside effective urban management and the importance of anticipating pressures before they become critical. Equally, it is important that urban polices seek win-win outcomes, securing economic gains while also avoiding social and environmental costs.
2. *Asserts* that **human mobility** represents both a rights-based consideration and a developmental challenge. Our approach has been to recognise the rights of citizens to exercise choices, but also to manage population flows. This is enabled through effective planning, identifying underlying spatial disparities, and adopting policies to rebalance economic activity and service provision.
3. *And recognises* the economic benefits of **international migration for both** receiving and sending countries. Yet, we also note these population flows have social and human rights implications, including the need for humane treatment of migrants, refugees and displaced

persons. Moreover, we consider that the issues cannot be resolved by countries in isolation, and that coordination and joint initiatives are needed.

In sum, the core policy challenge focuses on enabling families and individuals to access new opportunities and exercise choices, allowing the economy to fully realise demographic dividends, while also managing the frictions and threats of rapid population changes. To address these changes requires a strategic approach, informed by evidence built on strengthened national population data systems.

Mr. Chairman, I reiterate Cambodia's deep commitment to these issues, built on the recognition that our populations are *both the means and the ends of development*.

I thank you for your attention.