

**Statement to the Commission on Population and Development
Acting as Preparatory Committee for the Special Session
of the General Assembly**

As written

**GERMAN
PRESIDENCY OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION**



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ALLEMANDE DE
L'UNION EUROPEENNE**

**Commission on Population and Development
acting as the Preparatory Committee
for the Special Session of the General Assembly
for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme
of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development**

Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

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1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European Countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Associated Country Cyprus, as well as the EFTA country member of the EEA, Iceland align themselves with this statement. At the outset, we would like to congratulate you, Ambassador **Chowdhury**, for your election as President of this **PrepCom**, as well as the other members of the Bureau. We are convinced that under your able guidance our preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the **ICPD** Programme of Action will come to fruition. The 2 documents provided for information and, more particularly, the Report of the Secretary-General for the special session of the GA for our consideration are a very useful basis for our deliberations, and we would like to thank both UNFPA and the Population Division for the timely delivery of this documentation. We are very pleased to see our sincere wish, voiced in The Hague, that the Secretary-General's report may be as short and action-oriented as possible has been fulfilled. The Secretary-General's report will indeed help us to move the Cairo-process along to the special session of the GA in June and beyond, and to put it into a necessary and welcome synergy with the other UN World Conferences and Summits held in the nineties into a Global Agenda **follow-up**.

2. Before commenting *on* the different chapters of the Secretary-General's report the European Union would like to **reaffirm its commitment** to the principles and recommendations of the **ICPD** Programme of Action. The European Union welcomes the fact that, as stated in Resolution A/53/183, that there will be no **renegotiation**. The EU recalls that human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, are the first guiding principles of the **ICPD** Programme of Action and constitute the framework of **any** action taken in this field. The decisive features of the **ICPD** Programme of Action are its focus on the well being of human beings, rather than on human numbers, a human rights-based approach to population and sustainable development, and the recognition of inter-dependencies between population, empowerment of women, eradication of poverty, environmental concerns, and economic and social development. Political commitment of all governments to the principles, goals and recommendations of the **ICPD** Programme of Action is pivotal, has produced remarkable progress, and must be maintained and enhanced to achieve the full implementation of the **ICPD** Programme of Action in order to advance the broader development agenda.

3. Our priorities for **ICPD+ 5** are clear. They are that we agree action that will help to:

Strengthen the focus on the links between health and development and on the importance of Governments investing in health and reproductive health and integrate provisions of reproductive health services within the wider health system context.

Focus attention even more strongly on meeting the needs of poorest people in the field of health and reproductive health.

Emphasize the need for strategic milestones for action on key **ICPD** goals at 2005 and 2010, leading up to 2015, especially for maternal health, prevention of HIV and reproductive health services.

Identify „**Global** Champions’ on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and maternal health to strengthen UN leadership and achieve greater system-wide coherence.

Call for stronger action in the fields of maternal health, and gender equity and equality, as well as HIV/AIDS.

Strengthen the focus on the particular needs of adolescents for confidential and comprehensive services in sexual and reproductive health.

Acknowledge the need for longer term strategic partnerships between Governments, UN organizations and donors.

Strengthen the focus on political action in the **field** of population ageing.

Draw attention to stronger political action in the field of migration.

Give a balanced and inclusive call for fresh resources.

4. There is one additional concern, highlighted in the Conclusions of the ECE-Regional Meeting 1998 in Budapest, which we would like to share with this **PrepCom**. The situation in the countries with economies in transition, which are displaying severe problems in the level of mortality and morbidity and in the **health** sector, as well as in reproductive and sexual health, requires attention and support.
5. In the following, the European Union would like to offer a few comments on the different chapters of the Secretary-General’s report in chronological order, the focus being on the key future actions. The key future actions indeed should be our main concern in preparing the special session of the GA.
6. Since population ageing over **coming** decades presents developed as well as developing countries with a complex and formidable set of interrelated challenges, the number and scope of key future actions proposed should be expanded. Examination, research and dissemination of information should continue to contribute to identifying priority areas for political action and reform. Meeting the challenge of population ageing will require to comprehensively address the legal, fiscal, financial and **labour** market implications of

ageing for pensions, social benefits, social service, health and long-term care systems. Generational equity concerns need to be addressed in addition to social and gender equity concerns with the goal of maintaining and improving social cohesion. There must be more support for elderly people, as they grow older, to play a productive role in the **labour** market and in society. Health and social care systems should be co-ordinated so that they provide appropriate and integrated care for those with long-term needs, especially for the poorest. Lessons currently learned by developed countries in responding to the challenge of population ageing will be important for developing countries to be prepared for similar challenges in the near future.

7. The key future actions concerning **internal and international migration** are pertinent, but could equally be enlarged upon. More attention needs to be paid to dealing with the root causes of international migration. In this context, an active human rights policy, a policy of conflict prevention and development co-operation need support. The advantages and disadvantages of international migration, both for sending and receiving countries, have to be addressed in consultation and practical co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants. Integration of migrants must be ensured. Efforts to improve the data collection and analysis in the field of migration should be intensified. The European Union wishes to address the criminal activities of organisations trafficking in human beings as a priority. This shall in no way jeopardise each individual's rights to seek asylum and right to fair asylum procedures. The European Union **recognises** the need to offer international protection to those in need in accordance with international obligations. The European Union wishes to underline the importance it places on the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, in particular in view of the situation of women in those groups.
8. Concerning the issues of **poverty, economic development and the environment** the European Union stresses the strong interdependencies which exist between them, the empowerment of women and education for all, and the expected population growth. Health, in particular of poor people, must be accorded higher priority (by finance ministries) in national expenditure plans as a matter of good governance. Low health status and high rates of population growth are both cause **and** effect of poverty and obstacles to **human-centred** sustainable development.
9. The European Union is quite satisfied with the key future actions proposed on **population and education** and on **data systems, including indicators**. While the goal of education for all unfortunately is still remote, it is all the more urgent to **recognise** education as key to development in general and to the empowerment of women. Monitoring of progress and

necessary research on population and development calls indeed for reliable and internationally comparable data and measurable indicators.

10. The European Union reaffirms in particular the position on **gender equality, equity and empowerment of women** as contained in the **ICPD** Programme of Action and as assessed in **para.40**: „The empowerment and autonomy of women, and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status, is an important end in itself and essential for achieving sustainable development. There should be full participation and partnership of both women and men in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household.“ As the Secretary-General's report points out, some progress has been achieved, yet still too many women, and in particular poor women, are being denied the status and rights which should rightfully be theirs, during childhood, youth, at marriage, and during **mother-**and widowhood. In the opinion of the European Union, this is a priority field for further action in the implementation of the **ICPD** Programme of Action. We should also bear in mind that the Beijing Conference on Women built on the consensus of the **ICPD** and consider the ongoing parallel Beijing **+5** - process with a special focus on the prevention of violence against women.

11. The core of the **ICPD** Programme of Action, no doubt, are **reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health**. The European Union welcomes the programmatic presentation of this field of issues, namely “Ensuring reproductive rights and promoting reproductive and sexual health“, “Ensuring access to quality family planning **services**“, “Reducing maternal mortality“, “Preventing and treating HIV/AIDS and **STDs**“ and „**Promoting** adolescent sexual and reproductive health“. These are the central tasks to which the EU accords highest priority. The European Union notes with interest that important milestones related to agreed **Cairo** goals are proposed, namely in **para. 69** concerning contraceptive use and further benchmark indicators; in **para. 84** concerning births attended by skilled attendants in order to reduce maternal mortality; and in **para. 96** concerning the reduction of HIV infection rates of youth. The European Union supports the inclusion of milestones relevant to needed strategic action to achieve the Cairo goals. These milestones obviously need to be discussed and the EU believes that there is scope for strengthening their relevance and utility even further, not least in that they should be forward looking to 201 **0/2015**.

12. In addition, as another important objective of this **PrepCom** the European Union also would like to reach consensus on the identification of UN „**Global Champions**” to lead more concerted and coherent international action on core **ICPD** themes with a view to accelerate the implementation of the **ICPD** Programme of Action.

13. Concerning **partnerships and collaborations**, the European Union would like to underscore that partnerships with civil society should be underpinned by shared understanding of responsibilities and goals but also considerations of effectiveness and **recognised** contribution to **ICPD** outcomes. The European Union would like to emphasise that we expect and hope for full involvement and full commitment by the relevant agencies and organisations within and outside the UN system based on their respective comparative advantages. We strongly welcome the enhanced co-ordination taking place within the UN system through, for example, **UNDG**, **UNDAF**, **CCH**, and the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for all.

14. Concerning the chapter on mobilizing resources, discussion seems necessary with regard to a number of specific key future actions emanating from the Report of the International Forum. The European Union reaffirms its position that Governments have, through international, national, regional and local policies, the main responsibility for creating an enabling environment in which the relative importance accorded to population and development issues in overall development may grow. Political commitment has been identified as one of the pivotal factors for progress in implementing the **ICPD** Programme of Action. The mobilisation of international resources, however, is needed to support and augment the efforts undertaken by national governments, and should be targeted on the priority needs of the poor. The European Union agrees that efforts should be strengthened towards the fulfilment of the agreed ODA target of **0,7** per cent of GDP, and that the share of population assistance in ODA should increase, commensurate with the scope and scale of programmes and activities undertaken to implement the Programme of Action. The European Union as a major donor also feels that the monitoring of resource flows calls for improvements as to definitions and concept. The EU wishes to emphasise the importance of effective and efficient use of any and all available resources for maximum sustainable impact. This is a mutual interest and a shared responsibility of all actors involved.