

Statement by the Government of the Sudan

56th Session of the Commission on Population and Development

POPULATION, EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Merciful

Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons of the Commission on Population and Development

Ladies and gentlemen ministers and heads of delegations

Ladies and gentlemen representatives of international organizations and civil society organizations

Experts

Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to express ineffable gratitude and appreciations to the organizers of this 56th session of the Commission on Population and Development on the theme of Population, Education and Sustainable Development. We are happy to be here and to participate with you in this important session of the Commission – as one of the important UN Forums to discuss and review implementation of the ICPD PoA, and to share with you the experience of the Sudan on this important and intriguing theme.

The Transitional Government of the Sudan is committed to provide and facilitate the provision of education to all people: Sudanese and non-Sudanese in the country. Education is recognized as a national priority and a key determinant for development and reform by the transitional government, which will continue to address the challenges that this sector faces at all levels of education: pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary. The Government will thus increase its investments in the sector to ensure that education is inclusive and equitable, and that the school environment everywhere in the country is conducive to modern education: infrastructure, digitalization, teaching, learning, and acquiring knowledge and skills, considering breaching the gender gap in education.

Since its independence in 1956 the governments and people of the Sudan invested in this sector, primarily because of their conviction that education is an engine of growth, development and transformation for the individuals, their families and for the whole country. The outcomes of investment in education are evidenced in the national human capital and national human resources in the Sudan and abroad. Recent evidence show that demographic change, education, and the educated Sudanese diaspora have been instrumental in the December 2018 revolution and in the regime change in April 2019. They have called for human rights, justice, peace, and stability.

Ladies and Gentlemen

While the Sudan is hoping to transit to democracy and civilian rule, it is facing immense challenges on population, education, and sustainable development. A national review of the ICPD at 30 and Cairo Declaration in 2013, which was undertaken in close collaboration with UNFPA Sudan Country Office, as part of the 6th regional review for the Arab Region, has shown that the Sudan have one of the highest population growth rates (2.39%) in the world. And about 70% of the population are below age 30. Combined with high and increasing poverty (increased from 46.5% in 2015 to 65,5% in 2022), this demographic pressure is detrimental to both of education and reproductive health, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on education for all (SDG4) in our country, which provides strong evidence that implementation of the ICPD Plan of Action is critical to achieving SDGs. The negative impacts of COVID 19 on production and economic growth, which declined from positive 3.6% in 2016 to negative 3.6% in 2020, and increasing debt burden, have worsened the situation in the country. Furthermore, this has contributed to cuts in education budgets, which affects progress towards achieving SDG 4 by 2030.

Education also increases women' and girls' employability, economic and social empowerment, and hence their autonomy in decision-making and hence, increasing their access and use of modern family planning methods, and reducing their exposure to harmful practices and gender-based violence, and ultimately reduced rates of maternal mortality. In short, the country would increase its investments in health and education as human development accelerators and support for harnessing its demographic dividend.

Making informative actions and decisions to address population, education and sustainable development challenges will require accurate and timely data. Especially availability of accurate, timely and complete georeferenced demographic data on the people and their growth, on their demographic dynamics and distribution by age sex, and on their socioeconomic characteristics, especially education, and employment, will be critical for the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action, Cairo Declaration 2013, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in the Sudan. Also, the Sudan needs data to support good governance and democracy, and for achieving peace and stability in the country.

Currently the Sudan is experiencing slack in data production. The first-ever digital population and housing census that was scheduled for 2018 is still impending and is now rescheduled for 2024. National sample surveys, such as the MICs Survey, and the Household Budget and Expenditure Survey, have been delayed considerably due to lack of funds and political unrest in the country. The administrative records, especially the civil register of persons, births, and deaths, are incomplete. While we hope for this situation to be addressed, we are also hoping for we are hoping for the Demographic and Health Survey to resume operations in the Sudan.

To conclude, and with the support of UNFPA, the government of Sudan has in place a Costed Plan of Action for implementation of ICPD PoA National Commitments made during Nairobi Summit 2019. The costed PoA will be used for mobilizing domestic resources as well as from private sector and donor resources to accelerate implementation of ICPD agenda; to which Sudan government is committed both politically and financially.