

Closing remarks
Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division, UN DESA
Fifty-second Session of the Commission on Population and Development
New York, 5 April 2019

Ambassador Courtenay Rattray,

Dr. Natalia Kanem,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to address the closing session of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development.

This week, we met for three main reasons:

- To assess what we have achieved in delivering on the promises of the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994;
- To review what still needs to be done to achieve fully the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action from the Cairo conference; and also
- To recognize the critical linkages between implementing the Programme of Action and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The declaration that you have adopted by consensus contains a strong message.

Although much has been achieved, we must also remember the promise that no one will be left behind. Millions of people are still waiting for that promise to come true. As the Deputy-Secretary-General observed on Monday, while declining proportions of persons in need or at risk may paint a rosy picture, the harsh reality is that, in some situations, the total number of such persons is still on the rise.

All of us – Governments, UN system, international organizations, civil society – can take home, from this 52nd session of the Commission on Population and Development, an urgent call to redouble efforts to implement the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo 25 years ago.

Allow me to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, our Chair, as well as our four very capable and committed Vice-Chairs, for the successful conclusion of this session. You paved the road to a successful adoption of the political declaration, while also organizing a novel and stimulating session.

More broadly, I warmly congratulate all Member States for the results of this session, and I especially wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the 5 chairs of the regional review conferences on population and development, whose participation in the panel on Tuesday morning was invaluable.

I also thank the various speakers, experts and advocates who have contributed to the dialogue of this session, and the organizers of an excellent collection of side events.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This week you have affirmed that, now more than ever, our actions must be grounded in evidence and informed by accurate, up-to-date and disaggregated data.

We hope this week will inspire you to explore the nexus between population and development issues in your upcoming contributions to the high-level political forums to be held in July and September of this year.

For me, the take-away messages of this week are three-fold.

First, by demonstrating unity of purpose, the Commission has sent a strong signal that it is competent to continue to serve as the main platform within the United Nations to discuss and provide leadership on the critical linkages between people, prosperity and the planet, and on sustainable development in all its dimensions.

Second, you have demonstrated that we can continue to make progress on these issues when we focus on what unites us, rather than on what divides us.

And third, we have seen, once again, that by working together we can overcome challenges and move forward.

In particular, let me thank Dr. Natalia Kanem and her team at UNFPA for an outstanding collaboration in preparing for this session.

Next year, this Commission will consider the theme of "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development".

I am confident that, with the same unity of purpose, with the same focus on what unites us and in the same spirit of collaboration, we will have an equally successful result next year.

Thank you all for your participation and contributions. To those who have travelled from afar, I wish you a safe journey home.

We look forward to seeing you again next year!