



PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY
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Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy

Commission on Population and Development

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Mr. Chair, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Italy wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the EU Presidency and wishes to add some remarks in its national capacity.

The Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, adopted in Cairo 25 years ago, has proved to be a landmark document and, 21 years later, it has also largely inspired the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Despite the time elapsed, the Cairo Program of Action represents, still today, a particularly relevant document, which effectively addresses the current challenges in leaving no one behind along the pathway of sustainable development.

For this reason, this year's CPD provides a unique opportunity to revamp our ambitions and re-launch the spirit of the Cairo Consensus, which recognized the people-centered approach of development policies and the key interlinkages between human rights, social and economic drivers, health, demography and populations.

In this regard, we look forward to the organization of the Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25, next November, and we support its objective to "accelerate the promise" in order to deliver on the Program of Action.

As described by the Secretary-General's report, the world's population is becoming larger, older, more mobile and more urbanized than ever before. These mega-trends have a major impact on the implementation of the Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda, and our priority must be to address bottlenecks and emerging inequalities and to transform the existing challenges into opportunities.

Mr. Chair,

Italy is fully committed to the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action, both domestically and in the context of our international development cooperation action.

Nationally, we are facing a new phase in our demographic evolution, with population ageing being one of the most important demographic factors. Italy is actually experiencing some of the mega-trends described in the SG's Report: ageing population, social and economic pressure on vulnerable groups, youth unemployment, among the others. To respond to these challenges, we are implementing new policies to incentive parenthood, also through economic benefits and social measures, to create new economic opportunities for young people, to set new norms against discrimination and gender-based violence, and to further empower women, girls and young people.

At the same time, while a part of the world is ageing, another part – particularly in Africa - is expressing its youngest population of all times. We need to unlock the potential of the youngest cohort that we have ever seen in history and transform the youth bulge into a youth dividend, by providing young people with quality primary services, health and education, and place them at the core of the sustainable development processes of their Countries.

Furthermore, and in full adherence with the Cairo Program of Action, we need to ensure the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

In this framework, Italy remains fully committed to protect and empower women and girls. We continue to witness persistent unacceptable practices such as child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and violence against children

and women. Italy has constantly and consistently acted, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to promote the elimination of all those practices that harm women and girls and prevent them from fulfilling their potential. To this end, we are continuing to be among the major funders of the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Program on the fight against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In this journey towards the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs, men and boys can play an important role in facilitating the acceleration of the “unfinished business” for gender equality and women’s empowerment. We believe that the active role of men and boys is crucial to end violence and achieve full gender equality.

Moreover, we wish to acknowledge the key role played by UNFPA for the full implementation of the Program of Action, starting from those left further behind: young mothers, pregnant women, vulnerable groups, girls and young people. Protecting them, ensuring their dignity and unleashing their full potential are our common priorities and, also for this reason, Italy has decided to increase its core contribution to the Fund for this year.

Mr. Chair, let me conclude by recognizing the value of the Political Declaration adopted at the opening of this sessions, in such a defining year for the ICPD legacy. We look forward to working together and ‘accelerate the promise’ for human dignity and sustainable development, building on the upcoming decisive moments: the HLPF in July, focusing on “*empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*”, the SDG Summit in September and the Nairobi Summit to Advance ICPD, in November. You can count on Italy’s continued commitment.

Thank you.