



1. Given that the Commission is the only intergovernmental forum focused on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the United Nations, how can we improve its work to better assist Member States and the international community at large in advancing the ICPD agenda while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The ICPD, and subsequently the CPD, is of great significance for developing countries and therefore must be protected and restored. In that spirit, these are recommendations to improve the Commission to advance the ICPD agenda:

- The Bureau should be tasked with producing a zero draft that does not contain controversial language, meaning language that has been shown to obstruct consensus in previous years. Furthermore, from the onset, the zero draft should contain the sovereignty clause, sourced verbatim from the ICPD. The inclusion of the clause demonstrates good will to achieve an outcome, and an accurate reflection of the ICPD in its fullness.
- The role of UNFPA in pushing for non-consensus language must be minimized. This is of particular concern with regard to efforts by the Agency to lead delegations to take positions that are contrary to national laws. This is a foremost contributor to the failed outcomes. Respect for the sovereign positions of Member States is essential for a successful result.
- It is important to note that even when non-controversial and vitally important themes are selected (such as nutrition), it is still possible (and likely) for the process to become contaminated and fail. There is no clear procedural solution to this problem, especially as the Bureau represents the diversity of Membership. The answer is to ensure that the emphasis of the Chair and all concerned parties at every stage of the process is on a successful outcome—which means letting go of controversial agendas in the name of a consensual result that highlights authentic development priorities. UNFPA, the Bureau, and all delegations should prioritize concise and action-oriented texts that are faithful to the ICPD and entirely omit non-consensual themes.

2. Population and development issues and trends, including drivers and impacts, have important implications for the further implementation of the Programme of Action and the achievement of the SDGs. What role can the Commission play in guiding Member States and the international community in responding to these issues and trends?

The Commission should look to the carefully negotiated framework of the ICPD to best respond to emerging issues and trends. The majority of the issues tackled in 1994 have not been solved, and therefore there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The foremost way in which the Commission can guide Member States is by ensuring that it produces a

consensual, Member State-driven outcome. As noted above, the surest path to this is to avoid unnecessary controversial agendas that splinter the process.

3. In order to address the above questions and issues, would it be desirable or feasible for the Commission to adjust its methods of work (organizational aspects, substantive elements, outcome)? If so, could the practices and experiences of other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) provide any guidance?

It is our firm position that following the 2016 review the working methods of the Commission do not need substantial revision. What is of urgency here is an examination as to *why* consensus has been obstructed, namely the proliferation of and insistence on controversial agendas that prevent the Membership from reaching agreement. The faithful execution of the current working methods are sufficient to achieve a successful outcome, but is contingent on a dramatic change in the approach of relevant UN actors with regard to respect for the positions of Member States.

Our continued priority is:

- To retain an emphasis on processes negotiated by the full Membership (and to keep the outcomes of any regional reviews for that region only);
- To accord civil society ample room for contribution, but to ensure that they are not given the unique status of a Member State by being permitted in negotiations;
- To focus on the full and accurate reflection of the ICPD as carefully negotiated, and to allow emerging issues to be guided by this framework;
- To produce action-oriented drafts that reflect real development priorities, and do not promote agendas that are unacceptable to States;
- To maintain the prerogative of Members of the Commission as reflected in the current working methods to reject outcomes that stand to violate their national positions;
- To continue with a spirit of goodwill in the hope that the Commission may be restored to its original vitality given its crucial importance for all countries, especially those of the developing world.