



Letter no. 000185 - 2020

14 August 2020

Dear Mr. Wilmoth,

I have the honor to refer to note by the Secretariat on the *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development* and to submit the following comments on the questions posed by the Secretariat:

1. On improving the work of the Commission to better assist Member States and the international community at large, the Philippines underlines that the primary mandate of the Commission is the follow-up and review of the ICPD Program of Action (PoA) in its entirety.

At this critical juncture where the relevance of the Commission is again in question, the Philippines believes that the approach of the Commission to the discussions and negotiations at the UN needs recalibration. The approach to population and development issues within the context of the ICPD PoA should be holistic and comprehensive, and not focused or hinged on one or two issues that divide rather than unite the international community. An innovative way forward should be worked out with regard to the specific contentious issues, such that they do not hold hostage the entire review of the PoA.

With the added consideration of responding to and recovering better from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippines believes that there are other aspects of the ICPD PoA that need crucial attention at this time, at the national, regional and international levels, and in close coordination with other UN programmes and entities. For the Philippines, such issues would include poverty eradication, UHC, social protection for vulnerable populations, women empowerment and international migration.

2. On the role of the Commission in guiding Member States and the international community, the Philippines is of the view that the mandate of the Commission remains relevant and must be maintained. GA resolution A/49/128 dated 08 February 1995 provides that the follow-up to the ICPD-PoA shall be done through a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism constituting the GA, ECOSOC and the Commission itself. The Commission is mandated to monitor, review and assess the implementation of the ICPD-PoA at the national, regional and global levels, identifying reasons for success and failure. Further, it is tasked to review the findings of research and analysis pertaining to the relationship between population and development at the national, regional and global levels, and advise the ECOSOC accordingly. Ultimately, the discussions are brought to the General Assembly, being the highest intergovernmental mechanism for the formulation and appraisal of policy on matters relating to the ICPD-PoA.
3. On making adjustments to the Commission's method of work, Mission recalls that in 2015, the CPD49 Bureau undertook extensive consultations with Member States, NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and international organizations using a questionnaire. The

results were published in a note by the Secretariat on the Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development (E/CN/2016/8) that resulted in the subsequent resolution on the subject matter (E/Res/2016/25 adopted on 27 July 2016). The Commission may wish to revisit these, for consideration.

For the current consultations, the Philippines submits that:

- a. On the duration, considering that the positions of Member States are well known, the Philippines does not believe that lengthening the session to allow more time for more informal consultations would necessarily result to consensual outcomes. Early conduct of small working group discussions on specific contentious issues could be considered, with the specific aim of unblocking the impasse;
- b. On the annual theme, the Philippines agrees with the CPD Bureau that there is room to introduce an emerging issue or review theme, alongside the annual theme that focuses on the work of ECOSOC/HLPF;
- c. On the panel discussion and regional dimensions, the Philippines supports the continued organization of these as there is immense value in regional inputs and perspectives in the implementation of the ICPD-PoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regional processes should also be strengthened to make CPD discussions more grounded, practical and relevant to Member States to open up opportunities for technical cooperation in the implementation of the ICPD;
- d. On civil society participation, the Philippines believes that the CPD could benefit from the conduct of a multi-stakeholder forum similar to the CSoCD or a dedicated civil society event similar to the CSW, preferably before the main session. The participation of civil society may be considered in recognition of their role in the implementation of the ICPD;
- e. On the outcome document, the Philippines suggests that the Commission consider a voting mechanism to facilitate, when necessary, adoption of outcome documents. While the aim is to have a consensual document, there should be a possibility to vote on the entire resolution or on specific paragraphs, as is practiced in other UN processes;
- f. The outcome document should focus on the theme of the session and should not be hinged on contentious issues that may not be relevant to the theme. It may be recalled that the theme of this year's CPD53 session was "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development" but agreement was not reached due to opposing positions on references to sovereignty and SRHR, issues that could have been temporarily put aside in order to focus on the theme and achieve a possible consensus

The Philippines remains committed to the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action. The Commission can be assured of our support and active engagement in discussing the future role and organization of the Commission towards more productive sessions in the future.

Thank you.


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