

Item 49th session of the Commission on Population and Development
Agenda item 7. Review of the functioning of the methods of work of the Commission

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Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates and colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to introduce the agenda item "Review of the functioning of the methods of work of the Commission" and in particular the "Note by the Secretariat on the Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development", document *E/C.N.9/2016/8*.

The note was prepared to support your deliberations on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission.

Given that the draft resolution on the future organization of work was already extensively considered during informal consultations in the past two weeks, and that the informals concluded yesterday, I can be very short.

The note we have in front of us was prepared in accordance with ECOSOC decision 2015/252 in which the Council decided that the Commission should review the functioning of its methods of work, with a view to further enhancing the impact of the work of the Commission and its contribution to the Council.

The Council also requested that the Secretariat, in consultation with Member States and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), prepare a note for consideration by the Commission at its forty-ninth session on ways and means to achieve those objectives.

The process of preparing this note was transparent, open to all Member States. We held 2 sets of separate informal meetings with the 5 regional groups, one Member State briefing, we held consultations with UNFPA and other UN entities, and colleagues from the Secretariat.

Madame Chairperson,

It is often said that the only thing that matters is outcome. However, in conducting the review of the methods of work, we at the Population Division have learned a lot. And given the sometimes passionate deliberations in the informal working group, the process of how we conduct our work clearly also matters a lot to you.

We all care passionately about the work of this Commission. And we all want to make sure that the Commission, which has made a critical contribution to the global understanding of population issues during the past half century, as referred to by the Secretary-General in his opening remarks on Monday, will continue to play its unique role in the years to come. Clearly, as we have heard this week, the challenges the world is, and will be, facing in the area of population and development require a CPD that is fit for purpose. Not least to ensure that we strengthen the demographic evidence base as we start implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In listening to your interventions this week, I noticed a lot of convergence with the note we produced.

Let me mention four.

First, we confirmed the continued centrality of the ICPD Programme of Action in choosing our annual theme in the years to come. In General Assembly resolution 65/234 Member States extended the ICPD Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond 2014 and that remains our "leitmotiv".

Second, we agreed that a separate agenda item on the contribution of population and development issues to the annual theme of ECOSOC may need to be reconsidered in view of having an integrated consideration of the Council's annual theme in the work of the Commission.

Third, you have affirmed the critical role and contribution of civil society actors in the work of the Commission.

Fourth, given that the discussions within the General Assembly on the methods of work of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum in the context of the 2030 Agenda are still ongoing, in particular with regard to the selection of annual themes and the specification of a multi-year cycle for the thematic reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals, we may need to revisit this element of our methods work once the Council and the Assembly have completed their work on these matters.

Madame Chairperson,

You have also stressed the importance of maintaining the high technical content of our reports and deliberations. In particular, we were very pleased that delegations expressed their appreciation for the high quality of our reports, noting that our reports were used for policy formulation at the national level. One delegation referred to our reports as "sanitized". Strange as it may sound, I consider this a compliment as it reflects the role of The Secretariat in providing impartial and objective assessments to the global community.

In this regard, we are pleased that many of you expressed the view that we maintain two separate reports on the annual theme, one coordinated by the Population Division providing a global and regional review, and one coordinated by our sister agency UNFPA, providing the status of implementation at the national level. These two reports are complimentary, reflecting our respective mandates.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me conclude by thanking all of you, both here in New York and from capitals, who have contributed to the review of the methods of work by completing questionnaires and by providing inputs during the various consultations we have organized in the past year. In particular, let me thank the Chair and her colleagues from the Zambian Mission for her guidance throughout this process as well as the other Bureau members for their guidance.

Thank you.