

REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR GHEORGHE LEUCĂ (REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA)  
CHAIR OF THE 56TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

MANAGEMENT SEGMENT  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
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Ambassador Paula Narváez, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is a privilege to introduce the report of the Commission on Population and Development on its fifty-sixth session. The special theme of the Commission this year was “Population, education and sustainable development”.

In his opening remarks to the annual session, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua reminded the Commission that education is one of the best investments that societies can make to build a more sustainable and prosperous future. Education helps to lift individuals and their families out of poverty **and** to address the negative consequences of global warming and climate change.

However, as was also indicated during the opening, progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 is seriously off track.

The education crisis we are witnessing today was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, we are still grappling with the devastating impact of the pandemic on learners today.

The high-level opening, the general debate and the four interactive and multi-stakeholder panels provided the Commission with a rich and diverse account of the critical role of education in achieving the SDGs and of the challenges of meeting SDG4 by 2030.

Allow me to briefly highlight 10 key findings of the Commission:

First, many countries affirmed that the realization of the right to education contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and the promotion of human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and the eradication of poverty.

Second, education promotes equal opportunities for young people, including young women, to be an integral part of decision-making processes and to participate in all spheres of life

Third, access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including digital literacy, is critical to thrive in our rapidly changing world. Closing all digital divides is essential.

Fourth, lifelong learning is an indispensable means for effective participation in our knowledge societies and economies. It should be made available across the age ranges.

Fifth, evidence presented included:

- That despite considerable progress in educational access and participation, 244 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2021,
- That at the end of 2019, more than half of children and young people in school were not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and numeracy,
- That nearly two thirds of the world's non-literate adults are women, and
- That girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from primary and lower secondary education.

Sixth, participants emphasized that governments needed:

- To provide increased support to teachers and educational personnel,
- To invest in educational infrastructure and in the recruitment, training and retention of qualified teachers to fill current gaps and future needs, and
- To scale up investments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and
- To build emergency preparedness and response capacity of education systems.

Seventh, countries stressed the urgent need to scale up efforts for remedial, accelerated learning and catch-up strategies to mitigate learning losses.

Eighth, participants called for promoting quality health education and literacy among young people and for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Ninth, countries recognized the role of improving educational outcomes in promoting the integration of migrants into host societies and the need to invest in skills development as well as to facilitate mutual recognition of the skills, qualifications and competences of migrant workers,

Tenth, the importance of international cooperation in supporting the efforts of developing countries towards the realization of the full potential of education for sustainable development was highlighted.

Dear delegates,

Even though the Commission could not come to a consensus on the draft resolution on its main theme this year, its extensive deliberations were not in vain. Indeed, I am confident that the Secretary-General's reports, the general debate, the panels and the side events, as well as the negotiations held provided new evidence and fresh insights which will be extremely useful in preparing for the HLPF and negotiating the outcome document of the SDG Summit.

In Chapter One (1) of its report, the Commission recommends to the Council the adoption of two draft decisions, namely a draft decision on the report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session and the provisional agenda and documentation for its fifty-seventh session, as well as a draft decision on the timing of the consideration of the report on world demographic trends.

In Chapter Two (2) of its report, the Commission brings to the attention of the Council its decision on the special theme of its fifty-eighth session in 2025.

In conclusion, I thank all delegations for their active engagement and the Secretariat of the Commission for its effective support.

Thank you.