

# COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by

**H.E. Mrs. Claudia Blum**  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

**Commission on Population and Development**  
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*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Colombia reiterates its commitment to the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and, maintaining the spirit of consensus and cooperation with which it was adopted, recognizes the important contribution of that Programme to the poverty reduction objective established in the Millenium Development Goals.

The implementation of the Cairo Agenda has provided an important guide for the adoption of national policies aimed at incorporating population issues in public policies. This vision is even more necessary in a time when there is a clear interdependence of global population and development issues with the situations and problems faced at the national level.

Mr. President,

My country welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, which serves as the basis for this debate. As illustrated in the report, the population distribution differences between developed and developing countries creates challenges and opportunities that must be addressed in a balanced manner, to make these population structures a coordination and cooperation factor.

In accordance with the classifications contained in the report, Colombia is in phase three of the demographic transition, as a reflection of the decrease in the general fertility and mortality rates, and due to the large number of productive-age people, specially young people.

Colombia, then, has to take advantage of the opportunities of the process known as "demographic bonus" or "window of opportunity", in order to promote social investment in health and education, giving special emphasis to the participation of young people in generating wealth.

In this regard, and in accordance with the commitments contained in Chapter VI of the Cairo Plan of Action, Colombia has launched national policies aimed at confronting the greater weight of working-age people, especially young people, in the national demographic structure.

A first set of actions seeks to regulate the entry of young people into the labor market, through the extension of education and technical and professional training programmes. The objective of other policies is to address the issue of youth unemployment

and the instability of the entry of young people into the labor market, on their way to adulthood.

In this area, programmes are being carried out through the National Learning Service -SENA-, to reach two objectives. First, provide young people the proper orientation to improve their integration into the working world. Second, to favor the accumulation of experience and provide employment with a greater formality, through support programs for small and medium enterprises by means of microcredit.

These actions will have an immediate effect on the opportunities of young people to become independent from their family nucleus in a sustainable manner and reduce the dependency rate with respect to adults. In the long term, the expansion and sustainability of contributions to the social protection system is favored, in particular with regard to the retirement and pension systems.

Mr. President,

In spite of the current favorable demographic transition, Colombia, like the rest of middle-income countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, faces challenges and restrictions that limit its capacity to take advantage of the potential of demographic dividends.

To the labor market limitations it is necessary to add the migration patterns, also mentioned in the report, which points out that "because international migrants tend to be concentrated in the young adult ages and are often accompanied by young children, they add to the younger age groups of a population (in receiving countries)". This phenomenon leads to the transfer of productive-age labor to other economic centers.

The case of international migration pointed out here reinforces the need to continue and widen the political dialogue on key issues affecting the development of countries in different stages of the demographic transition.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Colombia hopes that national policies for demographic matters are complemented with effective cooperation actions like the promotion of a favorable economic environment at the international level and the implementation of the commitments in favor of development agreed to in different summits and conferences. It is necessary, on the other hand, to drive national capacity consolidation programmes, as well as an adequate flow of cooperation resources, including South-South cooperation.

Without a doubt, all of that will contribute to improving the capacity of countries to stand the pressures resulting from the current population structure and its future trends.

Thank you, Mr. President.