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Before
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Population and Development

Agenda Item 4:
National Experience in Population Matters:
The Changing Age Structures of Populations and their
Implications for Development

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates

At the outset allow me to express my congratulations to you and the bureau on your election for the 40th Session of the Commission on Population and Development. We are confident that under your able leadership, this session will produce a fruitful outcome.

The theme for this session "Changing age structures of populations and their implications for development", is a pertinent one. The Secretary-General's reports reveal global trends and prospects regarding the changing age structures of populations in light of the demographic transition. Countries must be prepared to respond to these structural changes with appropriate policies and programmes in order to meet the needs of all age groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, at this point, to share with you about Indonesia's experience in dealing with the challenges of its population dynamics and implications for development.

Indonesia has implemented several family planning programmes which have shortened the demographic transition in the country. As result, there has been a dramatic change in the age structure of the population, which for the first time encompasses both the largest number of youth and people productive age. While the number of children and youth has historically been large, the greatly increased number and proportion of youth and those of productive age are recent developments. This has implications for Indonesia's future.

Our assessment indicates that the social and economic development implications resulting from the changing age structure of the population, especially the unprecedented number of young persons, has created a challenge for Indonesia to meet the various evolving needs of all groups in society. In response, the government has focused its attention on the growth and needs of the younger generation, providing them with job opportunities, education, including vocational training, reproductive health, including family planning, and ways of improving the status of women.

Addressing the impact of the current demographic transition is regarded as an urgent development priority. Attention to the promotion and protection of the rights and socio-economic needs of the young and people of productive age is being treated as an essential element in efforts to

eradicate poverty. Towards that end, family planning and reproductive health programmes remain the highest priorities for the country.

The most obvious justification for investing in young people of productive age is the fact that they account for more than 60 per cent of population, and they concentrate in a very poor areas of the country. We believe that by investing in the young and people of productive age we will contribute toward the achievement of the MDGs, especially the targets pertaining to poverty reduction; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality-equity and the empowerment of women; improving maternal health; and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

It should be noted that the government has been paying special attention to the huge numbers of women of reproductive age, providing them with comprehensive reliable family planning services. However, the biggest challenge to ensuring reproductive health and family planning in Indonesia is decentralization. On the one hand, it will increase the efficiency of the programmes, but on the other hand, it could hinder implementation if all the requirements pertaining to policy, finance, and quality of human resources are not met.

In relation to young and productive people, the size of the youth labour force in 2005 was determined to be 37.5 million, within the age-range of 15 to 29 years old. Yet, the statistics reveal the total number of unemployed young people in Indonesia is 8.3 million or 22.1 per cent of the total youth labour force. Youth under-employment in 2005 reached 9.4 million or one-third of the total youth labour force. To assist these young people, the government is in the process of reforming the technical and vocational training system. The focus of vocational training is being shifted from school-based to occupation-based training. So far we have 162 vocational training centres throughout the provinces in Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

Responding to the needs of the increasing number of elderly in the population, the government of Indonesia has formulated specific policies and programmes for them. Among the main programmes in this area are: the Development of Social Protection Programmes, the Empowerment of Social Welfare Institutions Programmes, and the Social Protection Programme. For example, the government of Indonesia recently implemented five pilot projects in five provinces by providing Social Security for 4000 bed-ridden older persons. The pilot project will be expanded to other provinces in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

Considering the complexity of the demographic transition and its significance for development, Indonesia recognizes the importance of international cooperation and exchange. In this regard, Indonesia calls on the international community and donors to strengthen South-South Cooperation through the Partners in Population and Development. The members of Partners in Population and Development represent more than 50 per cent of the world's population. Therefore, sustaining population policies and programmes in Member States of Partners in Population and Development will greatly impact the global population dynamic and the group's development programmes.

Mr. Chairman.

Before I conclude my speech, it is also my pleasure to report that the Government of Indonesia and UNFPA held an international workshop of Muslim Leaders in Bali last February to support population and development activities related to the achievement of the MDGs. The workshop was attended by Muslim leaders from 14 countries and they reaffirmed the importance of reproductive health and family planning in achieving the MDGs.

Despite the many challenges, Mr. Chairman, Indonesia remains committed to implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

I thank you.