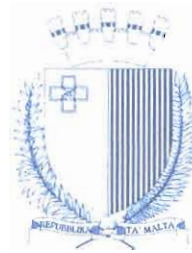


# MALTA



## **Statement by**

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**Ambassador**  
**Permanent Representative of Malta**  
**to the United Nations**

**Commission on Population and Development**  
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*(Please check against delivery)*

Madam Chair,

Fifteen years after the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, considerable progress has been made. In this regard, the Government of Malta attaches special importance to the implementation of this Programme of Action which is an important step forward in the achievement of a holistic social and economic development. During this International Conference of 1994, delegates negotiated a sixteen-chapter Programme of Action that set out a series of recommended actions on population and development, including those that lead to sustained economic growth within the context of sustainable development, protection of the integrity of the family, combatting HIV/AIDS, protecting the health of adolescents, and closing the gender gap in education. All these issues are have become inextricably linked to development in the context of the MDGs.

Madam Chair,

My delegation would like to present succinctly Malta's views during this general debate. Before doing that, my Delegation would like to refer to the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the EU Member States last Monday. While the statement generally reflects Malta's position on the theme under consideration by this Commission, my delegation would like to clarify its position with respect to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Malta firmly continues to maintain that any position taken or recommendations made by this Commission or any other forum regarding women empowerment and gender equality in relation to population and development, should not in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of family planning, reproductive health rights, services or commodities.

The national legislation of Malta considers the termination of pregnancy through procedures of induced abortion as illegal, and does not recognise abortion as a measure of family planning. Malta has consistently expressed its reservation on the use of terms such as 'reproductive rights', 'reproductive services' and 'control of fertility', including in the context of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Beijing Platform of Action (1994) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Whilst expressing its support for these Programmes and Instruments, Malta reiterates and upholds its reservations made at the time of their adoption.

In this regard, Malta also wishes to recall its position as articulated during the ICPD Conference, in particular the reservations expressed by Malta on Chapters VII and VIII at the time of the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action of the ICPD. Furthermore the delegation of Malta reiterates the reservation made at the time on the wording "such abortion should be safe" since it feels that this phrase could lend itself to multiple interpretations, implying among other things, that abortion can be completely free of medical and other psychological risks, while ignoring altogether the rights of the unborn.

Malta also wishes to reiterate that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action should be addressed by every UN Member State in accordance with its national legislation.

We therefore request that this position be included in the records of this meeting.

Madam Chair,

The implementation of social and economic measures has always been the backbone of the policies of the Government of Malta, including among others, free medical care, elaborate social security and welfare provisions, enabling every individual to enjoy a fruitful and satisfactory life. An important aspect of population development is education, where Malta has been focusing special attention on the promotion and provision of quality education and training within an inclusive culture and lifelong learning perspective.

My delegation therefore welcomes the efforts being made by all stakeholders to enhance the relationship between population trends and development needs. Emerging threats, particularly those posed by the global climate change, have undeniable impacts on the demographic growth and movement in all countries thus increasing the magnitude of these challenges, which affect in particular the vulnerability of small States, like Malta. The food crisis and climate change, are threatening not only the security of countries but also are resulting in a large increase of internally displaced people besides illegal migration, a reduction in agricultural productivity and a threat to fresh water resources, bio diversity and other environmental degradation. This situation is being further compounded by the current global financial and economic crisis.

It is therefore of utmost importance that a coherent and cohesive approach is adopted whereby all factors are taken into account when formulating plans and policies for the sustainability of the global environment which has a direct impact on population and development. In this regard, Malta acknowledges the decision by UNFPA to devote the 'State of World Population 2009' Report to the issues of environment and women in order to highlight the linkages between climate change and population factors.

Madam Chair,

One of the major contemporary issues in population trends is the unprecedented longevity that is affecting the demographic trends worldwide and which poses unique challenges to every society. The significant increase in life expectancy unavoidably implies not only a heightened demand for existing support services but also for new services and alternative approaches. It is for this reason that this vulnerable group of our society, Malta provides extensive systems of social security, pension scheme, social benefits and allowances, as well as community services.

Madam Chair,

Global challenges can only be overcome through a global response and coordinated action. It is undeniable that population trends are a key element of the context in which development takes place and that many challenges lie ahead. Malta remains firmly committed to its obligations as set out in the outcome of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action. It is in this spirit and conviction that Malta intends to work with other Member States and the wider UN System as well as with all the stakeholders in meeting the challenges on the current population trends faced which will unavoidably have an impact on the generations of tomorrow.

Thank you.