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STATEMENT BY

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Mr Chair,

Relating to this year's theme, "Health, morbidity, mortality and development", I would like to address two issues: **non-communicable diseases** and **maternal health**.

Even though non-communicable diseases are a major cause of mortality and morbidity and a major cause of poverty, they are still very much neglected. A recent survey by the Global Development in Washington showed that less than 1% of the 22 billion USD spent on health by international aid agencies in low- and middle-income countries is spent on non-communicable disease control.

The common separation between non-communicable diseases, child health and infectious diseases in development programs is artificial, and may be even harmful, for health and development. All health matters should be dealt with in a coherent manner.

The increasing burden of disease caused by non-communicable diseases is disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable groups of the population. This leads to a further widening of the health gap.

Strengthening health systems for improved prevention and control of non-communicable diseases is of utmost importance. To ensure best possible results on prevention, we need to adopt an integrated action on known risk factors such as physical inactivity, low intake of vegetables and fruit, as well as on challenges in the areas of mental health and environmental health. This also implies promoting healthy lifestyles and healthy societies.

Finland has a rich experience in successful non communicable diseases prevention and control. In 1960s Finland had the highest cardiovascular disease mortality in the world. In 2009, cardiovascular disease mortality among working age population had decreased to nearly one tenth of its level 30 year earlier. The success in Finland has been based on active research, demonstration projects - North Karelia Project in particular -, involvement of actors at especially primary health care level, supportive policies and active international collaboration.

We all agree that urgent action is needed globally to stop the unfortunate growth in non-communicable diseases. It is imperative that we are all committed to an effective

implementation of the World Health Organization's global strategy on non-communicable diseases. Health is critical to the economic, political and social development in all countries.

Turning now to the other issue I want talk about today, the situation of reproductive health and particularly maternal health. We all know that there is very little progress on MDG5. This is unacceptable from a human rights perspective and also because interventions in maternal health are actually cost effective and fairly easy.

Of the women who die of pregnancy and delivery related causes, over 50 per cent are women and girls with fragile health. And adolescent girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to maternal morbidity. Finland sees the right of adolescents to sexual and reproductive health services as a particularly important way of promoting MDG5 on a longer term basis. In Finland, access to youth friendly services has reduced the number of teenage pregnancies and abortions.

Also, we have very good experience of the extensive network of maternity and child welfare clinics. These clinics are part of preventive health services.

Mr Chair,

Finland continues to be a committed supporter to the ICPD agenda. Only by addressing broadly sexual and reproductive health and rights can we improve maternal health and make progress towards MDG5. We see the Programme of Action of the Cairo conference as one of the most important frameworks for the promotion of health and development.

Thank you.