

MALTA



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Saviour F. Borg
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Malta
to the United Nations**

**Forty-Fourth Sessions
Commission on Population and Development
Monday, 11th April 2011**

United Nations, New York

Mr. Chairman,

Malta welcomes the consideration by this Commission of the theme "*Fertility, reproductive health and development*". Earlier on today the delegation of Hungary addressed this meeting on behalf of the EU Member States. While the statement generally reflects Malta's position on the theme under consideration, my delegation would like to clarify its position with respect to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

As it has done on previous occasions Malta continues to reaffirm that any positions taken or recommendations and reports made on sexual and reproductive health, rights, services and commodities should not in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health, rights, commodities or services. Indeed such positions, recommendations and/or reports are to be considered in accordance with the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action, including the reservations registered at the ICPD as well as the reservations at subsequent International Conferences and this Commission.

Once again, my delegation requests that Malta's position be included in the records of the proceedings and outcome of this Commission meeting. Malta also reiterates its request that this position be taken into account in the preparation of similar future reports and is fully in the website of the Division on Population and Development.

Mr. Chairman,

Malta considers development assistance in reproductive health as being an important factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Malta's development assistance supports actions aimed at promoting and improving sexual and reproductive health care, particularly those aimed at preventive action and safe motherhood. In the area of sexual behaviour and reproductive health, there is a great need for awareness that men's health also represents a crucial variable in the family health equation which, if neglected, could result in fecundity problems and the spreading of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. To this end, Malta considers universal access to education and information on the relevant aspects of sexual and reproductive health to be an essential pre-requisite.

Mr Chairman

Malta supports gender equality and equity and hence actively promotes the advancement of the empowerment of women and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women. This is demonstrable by the great advances that women in Malta have achieved particularly in last four decades especially in the registering successes in the educational, employment, economic and social sectors. There are more women than men in tertiary education and a higher percentage of women than men hold highly skilled non manual occupations.

In these times of change away from the "traditional" gender roles in both the family and in society at large, gender equality and equity cannot be achieved without direct involvement of all. In order to avoid the stereotyping that exists in both traditional and modern societies early education interventions are needed, with the formal (school) and informal (family) structures, to encourage gender equality.

In countries with low fertility rates like Malta these can be enhanced by assisting workers to reconcile family responsibilities and work. Hence, the availability and accessibility of flexible work arrangements as well as special leave provisions at the workplace, alongside support structures such as child care assist parents to facilitate the reconciliation of work and private life.

Mr Chairman

Malta also supports the right of women to have the ability to control their own fertility and for couples to control the size of their families. The control of women over their fertility and family planning can be achieved through the employment of effective contraceptive measures. As stated already in accordance with the Cairo ICPD programme of action, Malta also maintains that "In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning." since we understand that the dignity and right to life of both the mother and the unborn child need to be fully respected at all times

Thank you.