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Development**

(Check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the Bureau of the 44th Commission on Population and Development,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your leadership throughout the preparatory work for this session of the Commission. We are confident that this year's session will be a very fruitful and successful one.

Allow me also to extend our gratitude to the Population Division for their hard work in preparation for this Session, as well as to UNFPA in their everyday efforts in support of the implementation of the ICPD.

The ICPD is first and foremost a development agenda. It represents a broad, detailed agreement encompassing a number of different and interrelated issues associated with population and development. It encompasses subjects as varied as economic growth and poverty, gender equality and empowerment of women, the role of individuals and families, health, education and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

This year, when the world population is expected to reach 7 billion people, it is only fitting that the main international forum dedicated to discuss population and development examines the inter-linkages and interdependency of fertility, reproductive health and development.

Brazilian fertility has steadily declined in the last decades. Total fertility rate moved from 4.4 in 1980 to 1.9 in 2009. Current figures and trends indicate that the present rate is now below replacement level. We believe that opportunities could be lost due to the lack of proper state social policies and macroeconomic stabilization adjustments.

Brazil has fully embraced the spirit of the ICPD and internalized its objectives through a wide variety of strategies, policies and laws.

In Brazil, access to health is a constitutional right. The Universal Health System (SUS) is one of the largest public health systems with universal coverage in the world. The SUS includes strategic actions aimed at improving access to reproductive health to women and men, adolescents and youth.

The System also incorporates the provision of family planning. It includes policies geared towards increasing the participation of men and ensuring access to contraceptive methods and to pregnancy termination, in cases specified by law. Access to contraceptive methods is guaranteed to all women and men in reproductive age, regardless of their marital status. Improving family planning services has proved to be an important strategy to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality and the cases of unsafe abortion.

In Brazil, 1.2 billion condoms are distributed free of charge. In addition, 34 million women in reproductive age receive a wide variety of contraceptive supplies, ranging from hormonal contraceptives, including "emergency" contraceptive pills, to barrier methods (diaphragm) and IUD.

Furthermore, the Brazilian Government implements the perspective of sexual and reproductive rights to its full extension. The universal health system provides support to those who face fertility problems, including through the supply of in vitro fertilization. These services include safer conception assisted reproduction options for people living with HIV. The sexual and reproductive health of men are also addressed, including by enhancing the role of men in family planning and through the provision of treatment to infertility and sexual dysfunction.

The ICPD objectives have also been considered in our domestic policies to combat sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV and AIDS, as well as to prevent and treat cancers of the reproductive system.

Brazil is well known by its pioneer policy in the treatment of HIV and AIDS in its public health system. We have resorted to innovative policies in the area of HIV and AIDS, by promoting universal access to anti-retroviral treatment available to all who live with HIV. Incidence of HIV and AIDS in Brazil has stabilized as a consequence, and is now following a declining curve.

This year, the Brazilian Government launched a plan to strengthen the National Program for Control of Breast and Cervical Cancer, which includes actions to strengthen prevention, early detection and treatment.

A thorough approach to fertility cannot underestimate the importance of improving women's health and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

The Brazilian national policy for integral assistance to woman's health includes national strategies for the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality undertaken by the Brazilian Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Secretariat of Women's policies. The relation between maternal and neonatal mortality emphasizes the synergy of this policy, in the context of the Brazilian completion of the demographic transition and advancement in the epidemiological transition.

The direct causes of maternal mortality decreased by 56% from 1990 to 2007, while indirect causes increased 33% from 1990 to 2000 and remained stable from 2000 to 2007. The increase reflected improvements in the investigations of deaths attributed to indirect causes.

An important dimension in the promotion of gender equality is the reduction of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. A national plan to fight violence against women was designed and resulted in the approval of a Federal Law, which helped to rigorously enforce legal protection against domestic violence.

Another priority stressed is the empowerment of women through education, including comprehensive education on human sexuality, and promotion of women participation in all areas of decision-making.

Mr. Chairman,

The ICPD's strength derives from the precision of its language and the integrality of its commitments. It was consensually agreed in 1994 and its validity consensually extended indefinitely last December by the General Assembly.

There is no reason to redefine concepts that have clearly been described in the ICPD. Stepping back on the existing commitments is simply unacceptable.

It is now time to seriously consider the new emerging challenges to population and development, such as aging and the prevalence of Non-Communicable diseases, migration, climate change and sustainable development as well as policies to improve economic and political opportunities to adolescents and young people. These challenges will be among the most pressing ones to developing countries that are at the highest stages of the demographic transition.

We need to reaffirm our political will to the objectives of the ICPD, to strengthen international support measures and design and implement concrete policies in order to make all these commitments come true.

You can count on our delegation full support, Mr. Chairman, to reach that goal.

Thank you.