

**44th session of the Commission on Population and Development  
New York, 13 April 2011**

**General debate on national experience in population matters:  
fertility, reproductive health and development**

**Statement by**

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Mr. President,

The Czech Republic welcomes the general topic of the 44th session of the Commission on Population and Development and we appreciate having this debate on the national experience in population matters. Yesterday we have witnessed a high number of delegations taking the floor, and I understand there will a similar interest today, which is a proof of how important this subject is to Member States. It is because fertility and reproductive health is really about the future of our nations and the state of our development.

Several speakers before me pointed out that this year the global population will reach 7 billion. We have heard the experts talk about the close link between high fertility rates, low quality of and access to reproductive health services and high level of poverty. On the other hand, there are many high income countries, including my own, which have to address the challenges associated with aging population. However, we should remind ourselves that the main role of this Commission is to consider population issues in relation to international development. The resolution, that is currently being negotiated and will hopefully be adopted at the end of this week, must reflect the global state of population affairs.

Nevertheless, while seeking answers to global challenges, we need to keep in mind that every country faces a specific set of challenges with regard to its population. The economic transition of the Czech Republic over the past 20 years went hand in hand with demographic transformation. Since 1990, life expectancy has grown by over two years. But in the middle of that period, in the year 2000, fertility rate reached its lowest level ever recorded. Fortunately, we have been able to turn the tide of declining population growth through, inter alia, national family policy, improving health care system, increasing quality and access to reproductive health services, promotion and protection of women's rights as well as sexual and reproductive rights. Still, much remains to be done. One of the main tools for stimulating population growth is, as clearly visible in other countries, the promotion of equal

opportunities of women and men. The Czech Republic continues to support the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. We believe that together with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals, these mutually reinforcing commitments are the cornerstones of population and development policies for the international community.

Now is the time to deliver on our collective commitments. The ICPD Programme of Action has been extended beyond 2014 and the MDG agenda is just culminating. We all know that the goals, lagging behind the most, are those of maternal and child health. Within the newly transformed development cooperation system, the Czech Republic has continued to focus on social development, including providing support to reproductive health or family planning services. Gender equality is central to achieving all MDGs and it is a crosscutting principle of our development cooperation. We are looking forward to scaling up of implementation of ICPD and MDGs on the global level. Nationally, I can assure you, we will do our part.

Thank you, Mr. President.