



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

---

8 EAST 65th STREET – NEW YORK, NY 10021 – (212) 879-8600

---

Please check against delivery

**Statement by  
Mr. Sohail Ahmad,  
Secretary, Planning & Development Division  
during the  
44<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Commission on Population and Development,  
11 – 15 April, 2011**

New York, 11 April 2011

**Mr. Chairman,**

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports to the Commission, which provide useful background for discussion on the priority theme i.e. changing nature of “Fertility, reproductive health and development”.

2. We also take this opportunity to appreciate the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the advancement of goals and objectives of the Commission. UNFPA and Civil Society organizations are important partners of Government of Pakistan and provide financial and technical support for the population programmes. Our partnership with UNFPA dates back to 1971 and together we have implemented seven country programmes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

3. With 175 million inhabitants, Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. Ours is a country undergoing demographic transition with about 36% of the population below the age of 15 and about 3.8% over the age of 65. The opportunities provided by our demographic transition are accompanied by challenges of reducing poverty, achieving sustainable economic development and slowing population growth.

4. We are in the process of finalizing our latest National Population policy initiated in 2010 in consultation with all stake holders. It seeks to attain a balance between population and resources and its goals are set out in three major areas of the ICPD, which includes expanded access to education, particularly for girls, reduced mortality rates and increased access to quality reproductive health care services and family planning.

5. In formulating this population policy, we have relied on best practices and experience gained in the past. The Policy lays down a broad framework to achieve economic development and raise the quality of life of the general population by focusing on family planning within the framework of reproductive health care especially in rural areas. The Government will concentrate on raising awareness, strengthening advocacy, building alliances and renewing commitment at the national level, as well as strengthening national capacity for monitoring and evaluation of goals and targets by encouraging national debate on specific priority areas.

6. The Government of Pakistan has taken major initiatives to improve reproductive health status with special attention to maternal health particularly in the context of ICPD and MDGs. **In this regard, the following achievements and developments are noteworthy:-**

- a. Adoption of the National Reproductive Health Service Package in 2001, to promote family planning within the comprehensive framework of reproductive health. This has brought down the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) from 4.1% (PDS, 2001) to 3.6%.
- b. As per Pakistan's latest Demographic and Health Survey (2006-07), the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has declined from 33% (2003) to 30% (2007). This survey also shows that there has been a substantial rise in knowledge about different Family Planning methods and 96% of currently married women are aware of at least one method of contraception as compared to 78% in 1991. With decline in TFR, the Population Growth Rate has come down to 2.05% from 2.6%.
- c. Nation-wide help lines have been established for providing information and counseling to young people on their sexual and reproductive health concerns, queries and related issues.
- d. Population and Health related contents have been incorporated in the school text books. Teachers have been trained to counsel school children. Ministry of Education has included Life Skill based Education in National Education Policy while Ministry of Labor had also launched project to address RH issues of young workers in industrial establishments.
- e. The Government of Pakistan has adopted various policy measures for women empowerment in social, economic and political spheres of the country including their increased representation in Parliament and Cabinet and setting up of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. In the longer term, the government will support gender sensitive budgeting to address gender inequality at multiple levels.
- f. Recently, the Population Welfare Program has been devolved from the Federation to the Provinces, which will improve the functioning of the Program by enhancing its managerial efficiency and bringing it in accordance with regional and local needs of the communities.

**Mr. Chairman,**

7. In the context of the priority theme of “Fertility, reproductive health and development” we would like to highlight the following aspects based on Pakistan’s experience:

**First,** there is a need for concerted and continued focus on family planning and provision of quality comprehensive reproductive health care backed with follow up.

**Second,** eradication of poverty and the need to build better primary health care systems are important in achieving the MDGs.

**Third,** the challenges of fertility, reproductive health and development require a global partnership as envisioned in ICPD requiring increased development assistance. There should be continued international commitment in this field to ensure achieving all the MDGs particularly MDG 5.

**Fourth,** the new policy provides an enabling environment for bringing about social and demographic change, particularly through improvements in education and status of women. The Policy also recognizes the need for concerted efforts to deal with the issue of population and development in its multiple facets, through collaborative efforts of a broad range of stakeholders, including public and private institutions and NGOs; and

**Lastly** there is a need to promote research and development, knowledge-sharing and provision of information technology for equitable access to health care services and medicines by all, especially in the developing countries.

**I thank you.**