

48th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development

Statement by Denmark, 13 April 2015, Agenda Item 4

Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative, H.R. Mr. Erik Laursen

(Check against delivery)

Madame Chair, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much on behalf of Denmark to the Bureau with Belgium as its able chair, the UNFPA and UNDESA for all the work that has gone into preparing this 48th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Denmark is very pleased to have the opportunity to address the plenary at this Session, which takes place in a momentous year: The Post-2015 Summit in September marks the beginning of a new era that will see an ambitious and transformative development agenda coming into being. Following on from the Special Session on the International Conference on Population and Development held at last year's General Assembly and ahead of the Post-2015 Summit, this 48th Session of the Commission of Population and Development could not provide a

more timely opportunity to address the question of how to realize the future we want, which is the focus of our debate here today. A future where the close relationship between population and sustainable development is firmly recognized. And a future where human rights and gender equality are the cornerstones of a people-centred approach to population and development. Because without a commitment to upholding the human rights of all, there can be no sustainable development.

Denmark has strongly committed itself to pursuing a human rights-based approach to development. While it is now more than twenty years ago that the international community came together in Cairo to agree on the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the principles and objectives set out back then can and should still guide us as we set out to design and implement a people-centred post-2015 development agenda founded on human rights for all. Population and development policies must be devised and implemented in compliance with international human rights principles and standards. This includes sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: The human rights of all women, men, adolescents and youth to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and reproduction without any form of discrimination, coercion or violence.

If we are to achieve sustainable development, we cannot leave out half of the world's population. The post-2015 development agenda that we will work to realize must be characterised by a strong commitment to gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and the promotion and protection of their human rights. To this end, the post-2015 development framework must include a stand-alone goal on gender as well as allow for gender mainstreaming across the Post-2015 Development Agenda targets and indicators, its implementation, review, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The future we want to realize is one free of discrimination against women and girls, free of sexual and gender-based violence and with recourse to justice and multi-sectoral services for survivors of such violence. This commitment includes bringing an end to harmful practices committed against women and girls, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. Denmark also considers it to crucial that women are included in decision-making processes, whether political or economic in nature, and that women and girls are provided with equal economic rights and access to resources, employment and quality education, including comprehensive sexuality education.

The world is currently facing the emergence of the largest ever generation of youth reaching 1,8 billion. If countries are to turn what could initially be considered a daunting challenge into a window of opportunity by realizing the so-called

“demographic dividend” associated with this large youth generation, it will require sound public policy decisions in the social and economic spheres that are people-centred and prioritise investing in young people. In this context, investing in the provision of quality education is imperative, including for girls and young women. This must go hand in hand with universal access to comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly reproductive health information and services free of discrimination, which are integral elements to public policies that ensure that the demographic dividend will indeed be realized.

Finally, Denmark would like to use this occasion to welcome the findings and recommendations of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process and to reaffirm the regional conference outcomes that serve to provide region-specific guidance on population and development issues. The Global Review Report presented at the historic Special Session on the ICPD last year has served to put in place a useful framework for the follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014. This can and should be of utmost help in aiding us to chart the course of the post-2015 development framework with regard to population dynamics and sustainable development founded on the respect of human rights.

Thank you.