



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations

48th Session of the Commission on Population and Development:
“Realizing the future we want: Integrating population issues into sustainable
development, including in the post-2015 development agenda”

New York, 13 April 2015

Madame Chair,

At the outset, let me congratulate you and the Bureau on your election to chair this Session of the Commission on Population and Development. My delegation looks forward to contribute constructively to the Commission’s effort to find meaningful ways to integrate population issues into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Humankind naturally desires to be fruitful and to flourish. Growth is a sign of health and progress. While we face risks with every human and social advance, we also have opportunities to manage growth responsibly and sustainably, with the common good of society always in mind.

Conscious of this responsibility, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that a central challenge in designing the post-2015 development agenda will be to improve the quality of life of the present generation, which hinges, inter alia, on ensuring equitable access to resources, the eradication of poverty, the adoption of sustainable patterns of consumption and better stewardship of the environment.

My delegation is concerned however, with the emphasis given to population growth as an obstacle to development.ⁱ This has led to inordinate attention on issues that find no universal agreement and to decreased focus on crucial, consensus-driven solutions that can more adequately address the challenges and opportunities we face. We would do better to avoid the imposition of

ⁱ Report of the Secretary-General on integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda. <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/CN.9/2015/3> (6 April 2015)

policies and subtle forms of coercion that do not respect the value systems of peoples and societies.

Madame Chair,

In developing countries where populations are growing, economies are often growing, too. The challenge before us is not so much population growth, but the crafting of policies and programs that stimulate employment, ensure investments in basic public services, foster good stewardship of resources, underpin good governance, and encourage the transfer of technologies needed by the developing world so that they are better equipped to meet their own needs.

My delegation notes with concern the effects of the declining fertility rate combined with the declining mortality rate in developed countries. The increasing burden that it places on social safety nets and health services is creating an alarming situation, in which our elderly and our youth are more and more vulnerable.

In this regard, policies that support youth employment and the family are essential. As stated in the Secretary General's Report, greater attention needs to be given not only to providing increased levels of social protection coverage, but also to policies that are sensitive to and supportive of the family and of traditional family value systems that provide vast social protection. Providing young people with real skills and opportunities will also be essential.

Madame Chair,

Shared prosperity is not achieved through selfishness. Stable societies are not built on individualism. Both are born out of a culture of solidarity that sees others not as rivals or mere statistics but as brothers and sisters,ⁱ and recognizes the human person as the agent of and not the obstacle to development. It is with these values that my delegation encourages the Commission to integrate population issues into the post-2015 agenda.

Thank you Madame Chair.

ⁱ Cfr. Apostolic Journey to Rio de Janeiro on the Occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, "Visit to the Community of Varginha (Manguinhos), Thursday 25 July 2013