



**Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Hassan Abbas**

**at the  
forty-eighth session**

**of the  
Commission on Population and Development**

**New York, April 15, 2015**

*Check against delivery*

Mrs. Chair,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election, and I wish you all success in running our deliberations.

Mrs. Chair,

Our Heads of State will meet at the UN Summit next September to adopt the Final Document and Declaration that will integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and targets into the Post-2015 Development Agenda, an agenda that will promote a sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations. People will be at the centre of the agenda, as they were at the centre of the ICPD Programme of Action in 1994. Most of the Programme's priorities are addressed in one or more of the SDG's, whether we're talking about poverty eradication, achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions, human rights, gender equality, healthcare or education. Hence, we agree with the Secretary General on the need to understand and account for the demographic changes that are likely to unfold over the next 15 years while designing and implementing the new development agenda.

In this regard, I reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, including those areas related to the respect, protection and promotion of human rights, including the right to development, achieving sustainable economic growth, reducing inequalities, protecting the environment, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, ensuring their universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, and ensuring universal quality health-care and education for all.

In the last 21 years, Lebanon, in cooperation with UNFPA and other relevant agencies as well as the civil society, has achieved a considerable progress in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action's objectives, by adopting a series of laws and programs in the fields of the provision of quality sexual and reproductive healthcare, family planning, combating HIV/AIDS, incorporating population concerns into school curricula, regulating the conditions of the ageing and persons with disabilities. The highlights of those achievements were the adoption in 2012 of the National Youth Policy and the National Strategy for Women 2011-2021 and its plan of action, and most recently the adoption in 2014 of the Law on Domestic Violence.

Mrs. Chair,

Despite all the strides that have been achieved so far in the implementation of the Programme of Action in Lebanon, further implementation risks derailment, and even the possibility of reversal in some areas, due to the emerging economic, social, environmental and security challenges that the country has been facing as a consequence of the mass influx of more than 1.2 million refugees from Syria into its territory since March 2011, representing today a third of the country's population.

86% of those refugees live today in local communities in regions which are home to 68% of the poorest Lebanese. Poverty in the country has risen by 61%, Lebanese unemployment levels have doubled, economic growth stumbled, and the national education, health, housing, energy, water and sanitation infrastructures are overstretched beyond their capacities.

The Secretary-General recognized the challenge of the mass displacement of refugees on sustainable development in his Synthesis Report of December 2014, and in one of his three reports to the Commission this session. The Programme of Action of 1994 also addresses this issue in Chapter X Section D, and calls for the implementation of the principles of collective cooperation and international solidarity in assisting host countries of refugees. Lebanon cannot cope by itself with the humanitarian rights and needs of the refugees from Syria, and continues to call for effective burden sharing and greater humanitarian and development assistance to strengthen the resilience of its host communities according to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan adopted by the Lebanese Government in November 2014 in coordination with the concerned UN agencies and NGO's.