

REPUBLIC OF MALTA



Statement by

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(Please check against delivery)

Madame Chair,

At the outset allow me to offer you my sincere congratulations on your election to preside over this year's Session of the Commission. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union. I would however like to make a few additional remarks from our national perspective.

Madame Chair,

Over twenty years ago the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action placed human rights at the centre of population and development policies and addressed a broad range of issues that underpin sustainable development.

We agreed to safeguard the future of our planet. Today the need for us to act responsibly and in solidarity with future generations has become even more urgent.

2015 marks the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and for putting in place the post 2015 goals. It also entails a paradigm shift in the way development policy operates. Malta believes that focus on poverty eradication and sustainable development with the ultimate scope of improving people's lives around the world should be top of our Agenda. In this context, Malta underscores the importance of addressing the needs of the vulnerable in our societies, particularly the needs of persons with disability.

With an expected increase of 2 billion in world population in the next 15 years it is obvious that population issues must continue to be addressed. The outcome of this Commission should complement the inputs made so far to the Post-2015 Process and should ultimately reflect their overall balance particularly those of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

We should address human rights issues such as justice, equality, good governance, democracy and the rule of law, with a strong focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and on preventing and combating violence against women as essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, as well as important values and objectives in themselves.

Madame Chair,

The implementation of social and economic measures has consistently formed the backbone of the policies of the Government of Malta, including among others, free medical care, social security and welfare provisions that enable every individual to enjoy a fruitful and satisfactory life. An important aspect of population development is education, where Malta has been focusing special attention on the promotion and provision of quality education and training within an inclusive culture and lifelong learning perspective.

It is through education that we can prepare younger generations and pass on to them the significance of taking into consideration the needs of successive generations. Our actions now will affect our children and our children's children. Empowerment through education provides people with the personal and social potential to acquire the appropriate knowledge, vital skills, competences and values.

Madame Chair,

I would like to recall that Malta is committed to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and to the protection of the right of women to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and the timing, number and spacing of children, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. In this respect, Malta recognizes the importance of the dissemination of knowledge, including information on safe and effective methods of family planning, to enable women and young girls to make informed and responsible decisions on matters relating to their sexual and reproductive health.

However, Malta continues to sustain that the right to life extends to the unborn child, and it therefore considers that the termination of pregnancy through procedures of induced abortion at any stage of gestation and for whatever reason is an infringement of this right. Malta therefore cannot recognize abortion or any other form of termination of pregnancy as a legitimate measure of family planning.

Malta offers quality health care before, during and after pregnancy, including emergency obstetric care, which is easily accessible and free of charge to all entitled persons.

Notwithstanding Malta reaffirms its right to oppose any recommendations which could in anyway create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health or rights or commodities.

Madame Chair,

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to augur this session of the Commission a successful outcome. The Government of Malta remains committed to engage with its international partners in delivering on the promise of a better and fairer world for present and future generations.

Thank you.