



Economic and Social Council
Commission on Population and Development
13-17 April 2015
General Debate

Chair,

Last year, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (ICPD) was reaffirmed by all UN Member States. It was also recognized that a lot remains to be done before the ICPD is fully implemented, and that enhanced and urgent efforts are required to meet the commitments made in 1994.

This is why Norway gives the highest priority to efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We are fully committed to the work initiated by the UN Secretary General's office for a new long term Global Strategy for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (2016-2030). The strategy will i. a. address the unfinished agenda, including meeting the unmet demand for contraceptives. Access to contraceptives is an important factor to bring down illegal and unsafe abortions, which deprive so many women and adolescents of their lives. Even with full access to contraceptives, however, will there be need for abortion services.

The Global Financing Facility in Support of Every Woman Every Child , which will be launched during the Finance for Development Conference in Addis in July, is set out to accelerate efforts to end preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths and improve their quality of life. In reality the GFF is set out to finance the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy. Norway has already committed the equivalent of USD 632 million over a period of 6 years to the Global Financing Facility.

Investing in education is a key priority for Norway. There are important synergies between health and education. Education for all, and especially girls, leads to economic growth.

Education has a co-benefit for health. Education leads to fewer unintended teenage pregnancies and healthier babies. Providing comprehensive sexuality education needs to become integral to a young person's education. This will equip young people with tools to make informed choices about their lives. This is also what young people want.

Chair,

Every person has the right to be free from discrimination and fully enjoy all human rights, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Culture and religion are important in supporting central values of human dignity, and in protecting the rights of all human beings, especially those in a vulnerable position. Unfortunately, references to culture and religion may also be used to suppress people, and to deny them access to the protection and services they need. Cultures evolve and change over time. This can be clearly seen in connection with harmful traditional practices.

We welcome and are actively engaged in the global movement to combat child, early and forced marriage, and we promote zero tolerance for violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation.

Chair,

Norway strongly supports the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report on integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda, underlining the importance of high quality demographic data.

The Programme of Action highlighted the importance of demographic skills for monitoring human development and planning measures, as well as for assessing the effects of policy decisions and implementing corrective actions.

The demographic changes likely to unfold over the next 15 years will have extensive implications for our efforts to achieve sustainable development. We will not be able to meet these challenges without demographic data and analysis.

Chair,

The Commission on Population and Development has a key role in following up the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The Commission should also have an important role in monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you.