



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

STATEMENT BY ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANIASTAN AT THE 49th SESSION OF
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEW YORK 11-15 APRIL 2016

H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia the Permanent Representative of Zambia to the UN,

Honorable Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a great honor and privilege to speak on behalf of my delegation, the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in this Forty ninth Session of the United Nations' Commission on Population and Development. I congratulate you and your bureau on being elected as chair of this important session. I would also like to extend my gratitudes to the organizers and for the excellent arrangement and reports they have produced.

Mr. Chair! As the theme of 49th session is “ Strengthening the Demographic evidence base for the post 2015 development agenda”, allow me first briefly talk about post 2015 development agenda/SDGs and then will come back on the issue of strengthening demographic evidence bases.

I think that all participants in this conference can agree that implementing the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development will be more problematic in conflict-affected states such as Afghanistan than in non-conflict states. At the time that the international community transitions to a renewed development framework, it is essential to ask how peace and security considerations should be taken into account when the Sustainable Development Goals are being implemented, measured and evaluated.

Another major challenge will be to finance the ambitious SDG program in the countries with the context of poor economic performance and weak political institutions. The 2015 International Conference on Financing for Development emphasized that the financing of the SDG program is central to its planning and implementation process. Solutions can be devised for financing and other challenging issues by integrating diverse activity streams, including strengthening public policies, improving regulatory frameworks, unlocking the transformative

potential of the private sector, and incentivizing changes in consumption and production patterns.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Afghanistan achieved considerable progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. There were significant improvements in terms of access to education and health. Despite these gains there were other areas where we fell behind. More than 36 percent of the population faces hunger and poverty, and inequality has increased. Women are still highly vulnerable and are excluded from participating fully in the economy.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is fully engaged with its development partners in the formulation of its second national development strategy. The plan will be aligned with SDG targets. The Ministry of Economy is the assigned institution to plan, establish and coordinate a monitoring framework for the program. Aligning SDGs with our national plan and budgeting process is an important part of the strategy.

The SDG Secretariat that has been established in the Ministry of Economy is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the SDG program in Afghanistan. The Secretariat will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, and policy-based advocacy, to advance the program.

Collecting SDG-related data will be another focus. We have been working with both governmental and non-governmental institutions to incorporate SDG indicators into national surveys, studies and research.

Mr. Chair, Ladies and gentlemen!

The demographic evidence of Afghanistan shows that Afghan population is very young; about 48 percent of the total population is under 15 years of age. The over 65 year of age, represents only about 2.6 percent of the total population. The median age, estimated at 17.5 in 2015, which very below the south Asian average of 26.1 percent. More than one fifth of the adult population is composed of individuals aged between 15 and 24 years old. With all these figures, Afghanistan is the third largest countries with the youth bulge in the world.

Fertility in Afghanistan has begun to slowly decrease but still remains high in the region with averaging 5.1 children per women between 2010 and 2015. Infant mortality ratio has been decreasing and significant improvements have been

observed in terms of maternal health indicators. The combination of a modest curb in fertility and a more rapid fall in infant mortality has yielded a high population growth rate of 3 percent between 2010 and 2015. The growth rate tends to be lower in rural areas than in the urban, reflecting large migration flows to cities.

At present, fast population growth hinders progress in many areas and exceeds the absorption capacity of the labor market, of the education and health systems and of the agriculture sector.

The relationship between population dynamics, economic growth, labor market outcomes, and government spending is the key area of focus of the GoIRA. Currently, with the technical support of UNFPA, We are working on National Population Policy.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Monitoring of the SDSs and Demographic evidence bases require robust data management system. Therefore, we should give a particular attention for developing and using innovative approaches, methodologies and technologies that support the generation, collection and use of population and development data. It worth mentioning to thank UNIFPA country office for their tireless support in this area.

Meanwhile, for building technical capacity in this challenging area I would propose the International Commission on population and development to facilitate the establishment of vibrant networks of data professionals, including those from national statistical offices, academia and civil society, and the acceleration of the nurturing of professionals in the sector through effective education and training activities provided by national institutions and regional centers of excellence. This important can be done through further development of regional and south-south cooperation activities.

At the end, we are pleased to reiterate out support for further strengthening our statistical baselines with particular focus on population evidence bases and tracking our SDGs indicators. We look forward to contribute to the negotiations on the draft resolution presented (if presented). we expect that the outcome would recognize the results of all regional review conclusions including the Asial Pacific Ministerial Declaration of Population and Development, and recommendations of the global ICPD beyond 2014 review.

Thank you very much!