

## **Canadian Statement to the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development**

### **Agenda item 4: General debate on national experience in population matters: “Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda”.**

#### **Check against delivery**

Madame Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission. Canada strongly believes that strengthening the demographic evidence base is critical to our collective goal of leaving no one behind.

Canada remains committed to the goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Program of Action, and as we move forward on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our country will actively work with key partners to support their achievement. This includes contributing to collective action to improve the reliability, timeliness, accessibility and security of demographic data for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

While progress has been made, there is still much to do to strengthen health information systems at country level. Detailed information on births and deaths by age and sex are required to identify emerging health challenges. Moreover, increasing the interoperability of data between health systems and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems is also critical to improving access to data on vital events and enhancing accountability at country level.

We need to invest in innovative solutions that involve new partners, that target the most vulnerable, and that are country led. This is why Canada made a CAD\$220 million commitment to the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman Every Child.

Of this commitment, \$100 million is allocated to strengthen CRVS systems, which are essential to enhancing results and accountability for vulnerable groups including the poorest women, children, and Indigenous Peoples.

Canada is also investing in scaling-up universal CRVS systems, and their links to health information systems, through the recently established Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems, as part of our efforts under the Global Financing Facility.

Aligned with this work is Canada’s support for accountability in relation to the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s, and Adolescents’ Health, as well as the monitoring of

the health-related SDGs via Statistics Canada's representation on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators.

As we take forward these efforts to strengthen demographic data, I want to emphasize that we will not achieve the ambition of the SDGs and the ICPD Program of Action without focused attention on the human rights of women and girls, children and adolescents.

We must particularly support women and adolescent girls to live life with dignity, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. This cannot be achieved if they do not have access to the information, commodities and services they need to realize their own sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Last month, Canada announced new funding to UNFPA in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights initiatives, including widening access to a reliable supply of contraceptives and life-saving medicines for maternal health.

Many women and girls also lack educational and economic opportunities, and face a number of cultural and social barriers to leading healthy and productive lives. And they are subject, in many cases, to sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, the effects of which are profound and far-reaching.

Child, early and forced marriage is a complex and multidimensional issue that robs girls of their futures. Changing these practices will require the engagement of all sectors of society, better data to guide our actions, and the inclusion of all voices, including those of women and girls. Since October 2013, Canadian investments toward the prevention of child, early and forced marriage have helped galvanize efforts to create the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, which was launched this past March.

Our country encourages Member States and all partners to redouble their efforts to advance gender equality and the human rights of women and girls.

Canada is hopeful that the negotiations that have been underway on the special theme of strengthening demographic data for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs will be concluded successfully. Moreover, significant progress has been made on the resolution on the Commission's working methods. We are confident that these will contribute to a more impactful and effective CPD, and an effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Madame Chairperson, Canada recognizes the critical importance of reliable, timely, and accessible demographic data in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. We will work with our international partners to focus on reaching the poorest and most

vulnerable, and especially women and girls, as we implement the ICPD Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda. Thank you.