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Statement

by

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to the United Nations**

on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

**at the Forty-ninth Session
of the Commission on Population and Development
on Agenda Item 4: national experience in population matters:
“Strengthening the demographic evidence base
for the post-2015 development agenda”**

New York, 11 April 2016

Madame Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, the Group wishes to congratulate you, Madame Chair, and the members of your Bureau on your elections at this 49th session of the Commission on Population and Development. We wish also to express our full confidence in your able stewardship to lead us to a successful and meaningful conclusion of this session of the CPD. Please rest assured that you will receive our full support as we actively engage in deliberations this week.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their efforts in the preparation and submission of the reports at this session, in particular the report on flows of financial resources.

Madame Chair,

The Group of 77 and China continue to support the principles, goals and objectives set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which is a major outcome document representing a comprehensive framework on population and development matters. We also wish to stress that the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action remains crucial for the eradication of poverty and hunger in all its forms in an irreversible manner. Additionally, it remains critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with regard to ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the ICPD Programme of Action.

In the current environment of a persistent economic slowdown, financial instability, food and water insecurity, and the adverse impacts caused by climate change, with anti-microbial resistance and new and emerging diseases on the rise, we are keen to step up our concerted efforts in addressing population and development matters in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

This year's special theme, entitled "Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda", highlights the importance of effective and adequate data collection systems and reliable and timely demographic data in order to monitor the progress made in achieving the ICPD Programme of Action. It also highlights the importance of demographic indicators to monitor and follow-up on the achievement of the SDGs. But the more critical question is, how do we get there? For the Group of 77 and China, we cannot underline enough how vital it is to access appropriate and cost-effective information and communication technology, software, equipment and tools while building capacity of personnel at all levels. Only then, can we

improve the efficiency of the collection, processing, dissemination and analysis of important disaggregated data. Only then, can we work towards the utilisation, as appropriate, of anonymised and geo-referenced microdata from censuses, demographic surveys and civil registration and vital statistics systems. And this, as the reports highlight, can then be a promising aid in our work to ensure greater access to health care for all, especially women and girls, thereby contributing to the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates, which are still alarmingly high in certain parts of the world.

Madame Chair,

Data is an asset, but adequate, reliable and timely data is an *invaluable* asset. Adequate, reliable and timely data plays a critical role in strengthening health systems around the world in order to effectively respond to, and even to prevent, fatal diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and Ebola, which puts human lives at risk and halts the development of populations. At the same time, data allow us to make full use of the demographic dividend and also helps us create decent jobs for the growing working age population.

Against this backdrop, it is therefore imperative to maintain a strong link with the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are at a critical juncture where our decisions today will affect millions at least 15 years from now.

It is evident that important and major processes devoted to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda are ongoing, *inter alia* the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the SDGs indicator framework. In this respect, we have already seen a major shift within the UN system, especially in the functional commissions to revitalise and align themselves with the larger agenda. In this respect, the Group of 77 and China support the review and rationalisation of the Commission's methods of work, including its agenda items and documentation, without negatively impacting their technical quality and in order to support improved implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action overall and the SDGs at large.

Madame Chair,

We all have to do our part in aligning our work here at the United Nations and in supporting the agencies at home to exert the maximum efforts possible towards effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs. To this end, we urge and reiterate the need for developed countries to fulfill their commitments to provide Official Development Assistance (ODA), including technical assistance, and to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income to developing countries, as well as to provide new, sustained and predictable sources of funding to narrow the resource gaps and gaps in development. The support of the UN development system to developing countries, upon their request, will be useful in this regard.

Madame Chair,

In closing, the Group of 77 and China wish to renew its commitment to the principles and objectives set out in the ICPD Programme of Action. We also reaffirm our commitment to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and, through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation, to do so with a view to increasing access to healthcare of populations around the world as well as further formulating population and development planning policies through effective data collection, analysis and dissemination.

I thank you for your attention.