

**Statement by the United States at the  
50<sup>th</sup> UN Commission on Population and Development  
Delivered by: Stefanie Amadeo, Acting Representative to the Economic and Social Council  
April 4, 2016**

Thank you very much Mr. Chair, on behalf of the United States, I would like to thank you and the Bureau, as well as the UN Population Division and UNFPA, for your collective efforts to prepare us for the work of this year's Commission on Population and Development (CPD). My delegation welcomes this opportunity to come together with other Member States and key stakeholders to discuss this year's theme: Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development.

Changing population age structures is an issue not just of this Commission, but of the wider world. As the reports of the Secretary General confirm, many countries are at the beginning stages, or in the midst of a demographic transition. Others are now working to capture and invest the benefits of a growing working-age population. Though the nature of our age structures may differ, we can all learn and benefit from each other's expertise and commit to policies that will promote healthy, productive, secure, and sustainable societies for generations to come.

The preamble to the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action noted "Never before has the world community had so many resources, so much knowledge, and such powerful technologies at its disposal which, if suitably redirected, could foster sustained economic growth and sustainable development." This is even more true today. Our knowledge, resources, and technological capabilities have only grown since 1994.

Throughout most of human history, a changing age structure was a result of large scale disease or war ravaging a society; but over the last half century we have seen societies' age structures change because we are saving lives. The demographic transitions we now see are predicated in large part on improvements in child health which have lowered child mortality rates. Under-5 child mortality was halved between 1990 and 2015, thanks in large part to global efforts focused on meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development Goal. This is indeed a remarkable human achievement. Now we must build on our achievement and gear up to meet our target to reduce child mortality under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainable Development Goal.

Now is the time for us to harness this change for everyone's benefit. Though a demographic transition is necessary for a demographic dividend, we know that alone it is insufficient. We must work with policy-makers, civil society, and international organizations to enable all countries to fully develop their human resources and human potential. A demographic transition requires policies that promote not only job creation, but also girls' education and women's empowerment. We must also continue to invest in our health systems, to ensure we continue to address child mortality, as well as maternal mortality and morbidity. We know, particularly, the importance of reproductive health and voluntary family planning that allows couples and individuals to freely decide the number, timings and spacing of their children. These policies can turn a demographic transition into a demographic dividend, which in turn countries must take advantage of to boost the numbers of workers relative to dependents,

creating higher rates of productivity and GDP per person. This allows for greater investment in core services to benefit entire populations and improve everyone's lives. And of course, this increase subsequently allows countries to become more secure, more stable and more prosperous.

If countries are unable to turn a demographic transition into a demographic dividend, they risk an unsustainable future. Population numbers are growing, and countries that are unable to supply sufficient economic and educational opportunities risk seeing instability and conflict. Sustainable development policies that take into account demographic changes, and support positive demographic trends, are crucial to our collective security.

Countries seeking the benefits of a demographic dividend are not the only societies grappling with changing age structures. There are many countries at more advanced stages of demographic transition whose large youth cohorts have grown up, found jobs, provided for their families, and are now nearing traditional retirement ages. Ageing societies present as many social, political, and economic challenges as those with younger population age structures, and we must support countries as they work to facilitate financial independence for older persons, combat age discrimination, and maintain health and quality of life as people age, allowing them to continue to contribute to their communities for as long as possible.

We note the importance of data-driven policies highlighted in the Commission's reports and the need for more comprehensive data. Data disaggregated by age and sex is especially vital as countries prepare policies to best guide their populations through current and coming changes to their population age structures. Appropriately disaggregated data is also vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda and each of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We strongly support open, new, and usable data to better inform decision-making that is essential to our efforts to end extreme poverty and ensure secure and healthy lives for all.

We thank you, Mr. Chair, fellow Member States, and our UN and civil society partners, for your dedicated efforts to work together in developing sound policies on this important theme.

Thank you