

## **Finland's Input on the Future role and Organisation of the Commission on Population and Development**

Finland remains committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and to the outcomes of its subsequent reviews. We value the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) as the only intergovernmental body mandated to follow-up implementation of the ICPD PoA. The Commission on Population and Development needs to be preserved and its methods of work strengthened in order to continue its meaningful contribution with ICPD and the 2030 Agenda implementation. At the same time, we acknowledge that there is room for improvement. We therefore place great importance on the role of the Commission on Population and Development to follow-up, review and assess its implementation, and welcome the discussion on the future role and organisation of CPD.

### **Questions:**

**1. Given that the Commission is the only intergovernmental forum focused on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the United Nations, how can we improve its work to better assist Member States and the international community at large in advancing the ICPD agenda while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?**

- The Commission should aim for short and action-oriented resolutions that guide the Member States and the international community in advancing the implementation of the ICPD PoA and the outcomes of review conferences and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- There should be a stronger technical and evidence-based approach to policy development in relation to the ICPD implementation and better demonstration of link between the ICPD agenda and the Agenda 2030.
- The most relevant issues of the ICPD PoA and its linkages to current developments and realities should be considered as annual themes. However, there should also be flexibility to respond to emerging issues such as the COVID-19, when appropriate. However, the themes should be clearly based on demographic trends and the ICPD Programme of Action.
- The Commission should seek opportunities to actively engage and welcome meaningful participation of civil society and youth to provide additional perspectives. In addition, the inputs and participation of the private sector (like in Nairobi Summit 2019) should be considered.

**2. Population and development issues and trends, including drivers and impacts, have important implications for the further implementation of the Programme of Action and the achievement of the SDGs. What role can the Commission play in guiding Member States and the international community in responding to these issues and trends?**

- The Commission could provide additional information, or host meetings to provide updates on issues relating to the ICPD Programme of Action throughout the year.

- The Commission should continue practices such as providing expert technical reports and documentation with clear evidence-based recommendations on where the gaps are, and how to address them, in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action.

**3. In order to address the above questions and issues, would it be desirable or feasible for the Commission to adjust its methods of work (organizational aspects, substantive elements, outcome)? If so, could the practices and experiences of other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) provide any guidance?**

The methods of work should be updated in order to facilitate technical debates and to strengthen the normative role of the Commission:

- We appreciate the current practice of deciding on its annual theme two years in advance (as opposed to four years in advance as proposed). A timeframe of two years increases the likelihood that the theme will be relevant and in tune with the current political reality.
- The conference would benefit from interactive sessions with insights from local, national and regional contexts. We would welcome interactive session and the inclusion of diverse voices from different stakeholder groups, in particular from civil society. A combination of high-level, multi-stakeholder and expert panels for each year is welcome.
- We recommend the active participation of civil society in all other aspects of the CPD work, including the thematic discussions.
- In regards to the Secretariat, we see opportunities to better identify links between the ICPD PoA and population and development related goals of the Agenda 2030 and welcome more details on the division of labor and roles and responsibilities of DESA and UNFPA vis-à-vis the work of the Commission.
- The element of negotiations is crucial to the CPD process. When there are no negotiations, Member States are not motivated to participate in dialogue and face no political pressure to reach compromises. Without yearly negotiations, the CPD process and the ICPD PoA agenda would quickly lose their relevance.

**Outcome:**

- Finland prefers the Commission to produce a negotiated outcome of every session. Finland favors consensus-based decision-making. We are not convinced at this stage that opting for a vote on a resolution will provide a better outcome. However, we would also support the Commission in reviewing all options for achieving and adopting an outcome if consensus is not possible to help bring this agenda forward.