

**CPD55 WYA Oral Statement**

Thank you, **Mr. Chair**, distinguished delegates, and members of civil society. Speaking on behalf of the 1 million members of the World Youth Alliance and our affiliated organizations from over 200 countries and territories, it is my great honor to join the 55th session of the Commission on Population and Development. The World Youth Alliance is a coalition of young people between the ages of 10-30 dedicated to the defense of human dignity in policy and culture through the promotion of person-centered solutions and integral human development. We are grateful for the opportunity to address this year's Commission.

After having spent two years in a global pandemic, how do the young people of the World Youth Alliance view the possibility of future sustained and inclusive economic growth in the context of population and sustainable development? We take as our starting point the conviction that human beings are the world's greatest resource, and that human creativity is a natural catalyst for development. For this reason, we call for Member States to prioritize three things.

**The first priority is a deep respect for human dignity. This is tied to future sustained and inclusive economic growth.**

In 2017 the World Youth Alliance launched its Human Dignity Curriculum for children ages 5-18. This curriculum instills in children a context for personal identity and worldview. It inspires long-term goals, leads to excellent and healthy decision-making, and emphasizes that "action" follows "being." It is rooted in understanding that human dignity allows us to act in ways that respect and affirm it and that our freedom is an expression of acting in conformity with our human dignity.

**The second priority are conditions to promote thriving families.**

The family is the core unit of society. This is why it is concerning to see the fertility rates of over half of the countries in the world drop below replacement levels over the past few years. We call for encouraging family-friendly societies, as these form the individuals that will ensure that development is sustainable, and that economic growth is inclusive. The world needs policies that include targeted support for working parents and for pregnant women, as well as the expansion of childcare initiatives and maternity and paternity leave.

**The third priority is an economy that is at the service of people and not vice versa.**

Policymakers must recognize the human person as much more than just a consumer. Government efforts of social planning for purely economic purposes ignore human freedom and evaluate people's decisions based on financial outcomes. Yet, the economy exists to serve human flourishing and not vice versa.

The members of the World Youth Alliance call upon Member States to prioritize human dignity through programs like the Human Dignity Curriculum, as well as to prioritize family and a "person-first" economy. Doing so puts countries on the correct path to achieving sustainable development and sustained, inclusive economic growth.

**Thank you.**