

COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Informal briefing on the substantive preparations for the fifty-seventh
session

Tuesday, 12 December 2023, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Conference Room 7

Opening remarks

Ambassador Noemi ESPINOZA MADRID

Chair of the Commission on Population and Development

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Good afternoon. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this briefing on the substantive preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development.

My name is Noemi Espinoza Madrid, ambassador at large serving my country, Honduras, at our Embassy in Beijing, China to which I was recently transferred from New York. I was elected Chair of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development on 14 April 2023.

During my tenure as Chair of the 57th session of the CPD, I am working with all countries to strengthen the Commission for what it is: the intergovernmental body mandated to follow-up on the implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The CPD is the home of the ICPD. The ICPD is an integral, ambitious, and indispensable agenda for development that we as Member States must use as a fundamental way to achieve the SDGs. I greatly appreciate your presence here today as a sign of the importance you attach to this agenda.

I am convening this briefing well ahead of the start of the Commission's annual session. Starting our preparations early will, I hope, contribute to a successful session in the year when we will be commemorating the 30th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Today, I am joined on the podium by three panelists, Ms. Karoline Schmid from the Population Division, Ms. Priscilla Idele from the United Nations Population Fund, and Ms. Barbara Seligman from the Population Reference Bureau. Mr. John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division, will moderate the Q&A session during the second part of this briefing.

Let me also recognize the presence of Ms. Noga Barak from Israel who was elected Vice Chair earlier this year as well as Mr. Kita Yosuke nominated to the position of Vice Chair representing the Asia-Pacific, Mr.

Kariuki Kamau nominated to the position of Vice Chair representing the African Union, and Mr. Dusan Vujacic nominated to the position of Vice Chair representing to Eastern European States.

Excellencies,

The fifty-seventh session of the Commission will carry out a review of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action. It is my hope that the session will not only highlight the progress achieved and acknowledge the remaining gaps in the implementation of the Programme of Action thus far, but also identify present and future challenges and opportunities that have emerged in recent years and their implications for sustainable development beyond 2030.

Today, the world's population is more prosperous, more educated, and in better health than ever before. We are also much more numerous and, on average, much older than in 1994.

While some countries still experience very high levels of fertility, others witness very low or rapidly falling fertility rates. The number of countries with below-replacement fertility is increasing, foreshadowing a future of advanced population ageing, population stabilization and, in some cases, population decline.

The increased proportion of people in working ages in many developing countries brings the possibility of benefitting from the demographic dividend, which can advance sustainable development. A key precondition for this to happen is that we are able to guarantee the best conditions for people of productive age and thereby lay the groundwork for the sustainability of present and future generations.

I was able to participate in the regional reviews of the ICPD in Chile, Lusaka and Bangkok last month. I witnessed firsthand how these emerging demographic trends create challenges but, if properly managed, can be an opportunity for people to thrive and fulfill their potential.

Dear colleagues,

We are about to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the existence of the Program of Action of the ICPD. 30 years ago, the governments of the world assumed a commitment that today is more valid and essential than ever, a commitment to a comprehensive and broad agenda. Please allow me to insist and reiterate that this is a key moment for the world. Making it clear that there is no future for our planet and its inhabitants without achieving the wellbeing of people and the adequate conditions to exercise our rights.

I am certain that by listening to each other, all 193 Member States of the United Nations can agree on the centrality of the ICPD agenda.

We face great challenges and what seem like overwhelming crisis. There are poli-crisis that only seem to worsen by conflicts and so called “natural” disasters. But we also have great opportunities in our hands. The ICPD Programme of Action, a rich and holistic agenda on population and development, is one such opportunity, that outlines clear solutions to achieving all of the SDGs.

The CPD fifty-seven session at the 30th anniversary of ICPD, provides a chance to move forward, to leave aside disagreements and act --because the ambition is no more and no less than leaving no one behind. We can only achieve that by attaining equality for our peoples. Therefore, I invite us all to work collaboratively and in good faith.

Dear colleagues,

Today, we will have a chance to know more about the evidence underpinning the review of the Programme of Action. I look forward to hearing the presentations by the panelists. After that, I very much look forward to a fruitful dialogue with our experts.

Our first panelist is Ms. Karoline Schmid, Chief of the Family Planning and Ageing Section in DESA's Population Division. Ms. Schmid, you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you, Karoline, for enlightening us about the key findings of the expert meeting organized in preparation for the fifty-seventh session and for drawing our attention to some key demographic trends which will shape our world for the next 30 years.

Our second panelist is Ms. Priscilla Idele, Chief of Population and Development Branch in the Technical Division of the United Nations Population Fund. You have the floor, Ms. Idele.

[...]

Thank you so much Priscila for sharing with us these key findings that highlight the amplitude of this agenda, its important links with 2030 Agenda and the alignment with our vision of the CPD.

Our third speaker today is Barbara Seligman. Ms. Seligman is Senior Vice President for International Programs at the Population Reference Bureau in Washington DC. Barbara, you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you, Barbara. Your views on policy priorities for population and development within the context of future highly diverse and impactful population trends give us much food for thought.

Distinguished colleagues,

I hope you will agree with me that we have heard three very interesting presentations. Let me now invite John to moderate the interactive part of this briefing. John, you have the floor.

[Q and A session]

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank our experts for their contributions and John for moderating the question-and-answer session.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this briefing and to thank you all for your participation.

We have now come to the end of our briefing, which I hope you found of interesting and encouraging. Please allow me to once again emphasize that this is a key moment for the world and that as Member States, we have a great responsibility an opportunity in CPD57. I invite you to use the occasion to show the world that the Member States of the United Nations remain committed to tangible solutions to issues central to human well-being.

Going forward, it is my plan to keep you fully informed about the status of preparations for the 57th session of the CPD. Please make sure that you provide your contact details to the Secretariat in case you haven't already done so.

This briefing is adjourned.