

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT THE 57TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON  
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Monday, 29 April 2024

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.**

**As we take stock of progress and lessons learned, we must also seize the opportunity to look ahead and set priorities for the next 30 years.**

**In 1994, the world's population stood at 5.6 billion.**

**It is now over 8.1 billion, and it keeps growing.**

**We must prepare for continued population growth in sub-Saharan Africa – and slow growth or decline in much of Asia, Europe and Northern America, and later, in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

**We have achieved great progress in 30 years.**

**Fewer women die in pregnancy and childbirth.**

**Child mortality risks have fallen – across developed and developing countries.**

**We have expanded access to reproductive healthcare services, including modern contraceptives, and rates of adolescent pregnancy have declined.**

**However, progress has been uneven.**

**Many countries still fall short of life expectancy targets, and many developing countries face significant challenges in reaching the SDG target for child mortality.**

**Around the world, 164 million women of reproductive age – 8 per cent – have no access to family planning services.**

**While all countries are on the path towards longer lives and smaller families, some continue to face the challenges of rapid population growth.**

**Others are grappling with the consequences of population ageing and sometimes population decline.**

**Excellencies,**

**We must fully recognize the megatrends that are reshaping our world – climate change, demographic shifts, urbanization, digital technologies and inequalities – as well as their critical connections to the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**We must remain vigilant and continue to address situations where sexual and reproductive health and rights are being rolled back.**

**We must respond and push back when women's rights are being eroded, and when migrants and other vulnerable populations are mistreated.**

**We must continue to uphold the dignity of all people, ensuring that no one is left behind.**

**And we must support rights-based approaches in our population and development policies.**

**Major population trends for the coming decades are clear: continuing gradual reductions in fertility and mortality, the progressive ageing of populations, and their ongoing concentration in urban centers both large and small.**

**Population ageing requires a life course approach to health and education.**

**This means focusing on preventive care and lifelong learning to enable everyone to remain active and integrated in their communities.**

**The inevitable rise in demand for long-term care calls for new policies and public funding that ensure decent conditions for care providers – most of whom are women.**

**Ensuring universal access to reproductive and health-care services and the unimpeded exercise of reproductive rights will help meet needs for family planning.**

**At the same time, we must anticipate and provide for a growing need for assisted reproductive technologies, for the increasing numbers of women and men who are having fewer children than they desire.**

**As we also approach the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2025, we must accelerate progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of life.**

**We cannot achieve our common goals if we leave half of humanity behind.**

**Looking ahead to the Summit of the Future, we must prioritize the needs of future generations.**

**This means pursuing a green and sustainable development pathway so that they inherit a livable planet.**

**In a mobile and interdependent world, the international community must cooperate at all levels to facilitate an inclusive and rights-based approach.**

**Youth, women, civil society, local communities, and small and medium size enterprises must be part of the process.**

**The Local 2030 platform supports the delivery of the SDGs on the ground and can help bring the transformative change that is needed.**

**A strong Political Declaration by this Commission would galvanize action towards the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.**

**Together, we can contribute to safeguarding rights and choices, accelerate SDG progress, and support a sustainable future for people and planet.**

**Thank you.**

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