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**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan
at 57th Session of Commission on Population and Development
(on the theme “Assessing the status of implementation of the
Programme of Action of the ICPD and its contribution to the
follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development during the decade of action and delivery for
sustainable development”)**
29 April 2024

Madam Chair,

I congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 57th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

At the 30th anniversary of the ICPD, we are faced with new demographic trends and a host of development challenges. The global population, which stood at 5.6 billion in 1994 – when the Conference was convened in Cairo – has grown to 8.1 billion.

Yet, the ICPD Programme of Action remains relevant today, because of its transformational impact on recognising the linkages between population and sustainable development.

Madam Chair,

With 242 million people, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country. 68 percent of our population is young, below the age of 30. Hence, population and development are two of our focus areas. We have undertaken a series of legislative and policy measures to cover all segments of the society, especially the weak and vulnerable population, to promote sustainable development.

- Pakistan is working towards achieving **Universal Health Coverage**, including through a *Sehat* (health) card scheme which provides health insurance to the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- Pakistan recognizes the importance of promoting **female and child health** as critical drivers of demographic dynamics. We have made progress in maternal health sector marked by a decline in the maternal mortality ratio from 276 to 186 per 100,000 live births between 2007 and 2020.
- The Constitution of Pakistan makes it obligatory on the State to provide free and compulsory **education** to all children between the ages of five to sixteen. Resource constraints have been a hindrance, nevertheless, the Government is increasingly allocating a greater share for education in the Budget to achieve the goal.
- Pakistan has taken concrete steps to strengthen its legislative and policy framework to protect and promote the **rights of women and girls**. As an affirmative measure for promoting gender parity, the Government has reserved 10% quota for women in public sector jobs, 60 seats in the National Assembly and 30 percent reserved seats for women representatives at all three tiers of local bodies in line with the Beijing Platform for Action.
- To fight **poverty**, Pakistan has prioritized **social protection** programs. Our flagship Benazir Income Support Programme provides targeted financial assistance to the poorest in the society, seeking to ensure that no one is left behind.

- For sustainable **urbanization**, among other things, we have planned an intervention under the overall framework of the “Living Indus Initiative” to establish “zero plastic waste cities” starting with the largest cities in the Indus Basin.

Madam Chair,

The ICPD Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals can only be realised through the provision of adequate **means of implementation**.

The burden of high borrowing costs and exorbitant debt payments constrain the ability to address pressing societal issues. The stringent conditions imposed by international financial institutions squeeze the space for developmental spending. We are made to prioritise fiscal austerity, resulting in detrimental cutbacks to essential public services. These measures not only exacerbate inequalities but also severely hamper the government’s capacity to invest in the well-being of its citizens. To address these issues, the international financial architecture must be reformed to make it equitable and responsive to the needs of the Global South.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing the principles of the ICPD PoA and working towards a future where every individual can live a life of dignity, equality, and prosperity.

I thank you