

COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Informal Briefing on the Substantive Preparations for the fifty-eighth Session

12 December 2024, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Conference Room 7

Opening remarks

Ms. Catharina Jannigje Lasseur

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-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development.

My name is Katja Lasseur, I am the ECOSOC Ambassador in the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations. I was elected Chair of the fifty-eighth session on 3 May 2024.

I greatly appreciate your presence here today as a sign of the importance you attach to the CPD. 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.

Today, I am joined on the podium by three panelists, Ms. Cheryl Sawyer from the Population Division, Alessio Cangiano from the United Nations Population Fund, and Werner Obermeyer from the World Health Organization. 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. Norma Abi Karam of Lebanon who was elected Vice Chair earlier this year as well as Ms. Joselyne Kwishaka, who has been nominated to the position of Vice-Chair representing the African Group, and Ms. Galina Nipomici, who has been nominated to the position of Vice-Chair representing the Eastern European Group.

Excellencies,

The fifty-eighth session will take place at a pivotal moment. In 2023, the international community gathered for the SDG Summit, reaffirming our collective commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In September of this year, we came together for the Summit of the Future and for the adoption of the Pact for the Future, along with its annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. These documents cover

a broad range of themes including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations, and the transformation of global governance.

This session of the CPD also comes just one year after we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action and adopted a commemorative political declaration, in which we reaffirmed our determination to advance the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action and committed to address its unfinished business with a sense of urgency, duty and responsibility. Additionally, 2025 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, underscoring the enduring importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. These milestones provide an exceptional opportunity to build momentum and harness the supportive international environment to advance our shared goals.

The special theme of this year's session, "Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages", aligns closely with the work of the High-Level Political Forum in 2025. In this session, the Forum will undertake an in-depth review of SDG 3 on health and well-being and of SDG 5 on gender equality - two goals that are at the core of the ICPD Programme of Action. This alignment presents a unique opportunity for the Commission to highlight the critical interlinkages between the ICPD and the Sustainable Development Goals, to underscore how the Programme of Action remains essential to realizing the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and accelerating its implementation. These connections will be emphasized in the reports to the session and in a rich programme of speakers from a variety of sectors and stakeholders, including youth, that the Bureau is currently developing for the plenary meetings.

Distinguished colleagues,

Health lies at the heart of both the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it impacts wellbeing, gender equality and the realization of the choices people make about their futures.

The ICPD Programme of Action emphasized the need to ensure universal access to basic healthcare, reproductive health services, and to reduce infant, child, and maternal mortality, while calling for investments in health infrastructure, personnel training, and integrated health policies.

The priorities identified in the ICPD Programme of Action were later embodied and expanded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 3, which focuses on maternal and child health, universal health coverage, and tackling major health challenges like infectious and non-communicable diseases. The 2030 agenda also addresses the broader determinants of health, such as education, gender equality, and access to clean water and sanitation.

While progress in improving health outcomes continues globally, regional disparities remain stark. People in low-income countries continue to have substantially lower life expectancy than people in high-income countries. Children born in sub-Saharan Africa face higher obstacles to celebrating their first or fifth birthdays than children nearly anywhere else in the world. Conflicts and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have slowed progress in achieving the various health-related goals and targets.

Ongoing demographic trends bring opportunities but also challenges to the efforts to ensure health for all at all ages. In countries with growing populations, the availability of healthcare services, including for sexual and reproductive health, is often limited. Countries that are experiencing population decline with rapid population ageing, have to plan for the healthcare needs of their increasingly older populations.

Dear colleagues,

Today, we will have a chance to learn from the experts of the UN system on the substantive theme of the annual session. I am eager to hear the presentations by the panelists. After that, I very much look forward to a fruitful dialogue with our experts.