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Explanation of Position

Mr. Filip De Maesschalck, Minister Counsellor and Chargé d'affaires a. i.

Madam Chair,

Belgium aligns itself with the statement made by Poland on behalf of the EU and the statement made by South-Africa on behalf of a group of countries.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to you, the Bureau and the facilitators for your efforts to facilitate and relentlessly strive for consensus.

We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on an outcome document. Moreover, we are deeply concerned by the consistent questioning of references to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals throughout the negotiations.

Belgium reiterates its firm support for the Programme of Action of the ICPD and its follow-up reviews. When we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the ICPD last year, all UN Member States together reaffirmed that the ICPD agenda is still as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. This reaffirmation matters. The principles and rights at its core are crucial for realising the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Belgium stands firm on ensuring universal access to health care, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights. We see this not only as a fundamental human right, but also as a proven means to achieve positive development results on the ground, to the benefit of those most in need. Results that extend beyond the material, and include dignity, rights and choices.

For Belgium, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, human rights, diversity and inclusion will always be priorities. There cannot be any regression in these areas, as they are fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To conclude, Madam Chair, we remain committed to continued engagement in a spirit of multilateral cooperation, with the aim of achieving consensual outcomes, to advance these critical issues.

I thank you.