



**Statement of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development, in explanation of position**

*New York, 11 April 2025*

Madam Chair,

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Madam Chair, and the Bureau for your leadership of this 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ms. Jessica Orduz of Colombia and Ms. Norma Abi Karam of Lebanon for their efforts in facilitating negotiations on this text over many hours.

The Holy See underscores once more its strong support for the theme of the Commission this year. The health and wellbeing of all, at all ages, is a critical priority that lies at the heart of integral human development.

From the outset, the Holy See expressed its hope for a focused, balanced, and *consensual* text that would highlight the crucial connection between healthcare, poverty eradication and development for all. A shared commitment to addressing these pressing global challenges would have enabled the Commission to speak with one voice in advancing the common good.

It is unfortunate that the Commission was not able to set aside contentious issues in order to adopt a resolution on this important theme. An inordinate focus on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights has again derailed the process, including disregard for concerns raised by a number of delegations. Notwithstanding the inability to find consensus on an outcome text, it is at least encouraging that we continue to agree on the importance of maintaining the practice of consensual adoption. The success and longevity of this Commission is contingent on true respect for the positions of sovereign States, especially with regard to sensitive issues.

The Holy See would like to express its deep concern regarding language on sexual and reproductive health and, in particular, reproductive rights. This language has always been controversial, including in Cairo in 1994. My delegation supported, and continues to support, much stronger language promoting the flourishing of women and children and healthcare oriented toward protecting all

human life at all stages. Suggesting that reproductive health includes a right to abortion explicitly violates the language of the ICPD, defies moral and legal standards within domestic legislations and divides efforts to address the real needs of mothers and children, especially those yet unborn.

Madam Chair,

The Holy See reiterates its commitment to working constructively with all delegations in a spirit of mutual respect and dialogue. We hope that in future sessions, this will result in the adoption of a resolution which every delegation can fully support.

Thank you.