

**Statement by representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Tahereh Zandi**  
**at the 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development**  
**Agenda Item 3: General Debate,**  
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In the name of God, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful

Check against delivery!

**Madam Chair**

Population, as a fundamental element for a progressive and dynamic economy, plays a pivotal role in shaping a country's economic trajectory. Following the Islamic Revolution and during 1980s, my country experienced rapid population growth and increased fertility rates, persisting until 1994 when the government implemented population control plans. These interventions led to a decline in fertility rates from 6.5 to around 1.6 by the early 2000s. Unfortunately, the continuation of this trend adversely impacted on the country's fertility rate and gradually posed a significant challenge to the nation's demographic structure.

Recognizing the critical role of population in socio-economic development, and considering the youth population as an opportunity, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution issued general population policies in May 2014 to address declining growth and fertility rates. The policy includes key elements such as:

- Promoting a vibrant, youthful population by increasing fertility rates above the replacement level.
- Removing barriers to marriage, enhancing support for young couples, and lowering the marriage age to promote childbirth and nurture a capable generation.

- Providing adequate facilities for mothers during pregnancy and breastfeeding, along with insurance coverage for childbirth and infertility treatments, while reinforcing supportive institutions.
- Reforming public education on family authenticity and child-rearing, emphasizing life skills and communication training, providing counseling aligned with Islamic-Iranian values, and enhancing the social security and health systems to support fertility and childbirth.
- Improving health, nutrition, and preventing social harms.
- Fostering a culture of respect for older generations, ensuring their health and care, and utilizing their experiences and capabilities effectively.

In light of these considerations, promoting sustainable population growth through comprehensive initiatives, particularly the Family Protection and Youth Population Law (November 2021) and the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (adopted in July 2024), is the key focus of our population agenda. These policies aim to facilitate marriage and support young couples by increasing financial assistance, providing marriage and child-rearing loans, ensuring nine months of paid maternity leave and 15 days of paid paternity leave, and offering essential facilities for mothers.

Public education initiatives emphasize the significance of family, essential life skills, and effective parenting. Furthermore, key components include the establishment of kindergartens and mother-child care rooms within all government and public facilities, the allocation of land for families with three or more children, and the provision of hygiene and nutritional support for pregnant women and young children.

Iran emphasizes the economic empowerment of families and the removal of social barriers to mitigate risks posed by an aging population and ensure a dynamic workforce. The overarching objective is to uphold family values and rejuvenate the role of youth in societal development.

**Excellence, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Reaching around 9 million elderly people has prompted my government to prioritize creating age-friendly cities and communities. This affects markets, labor, social security, health care, long-term care, and the relationship between generations. Iran has launched a national project to create age-friendly environments in some provinces. This project aims to ensure that age is not a barrier to living well and that the environment, activities, and services support and enable older people to enjoy life and feel well. Additionally, the Community Driven Development approach program has been piloted in a few cities of Iran. It is a peer group-based local agenda for the empowerment of older people and facilitates their participation in the community.

**Madam Chair**

**Distinguished Colleagues,**

Considering the experiences of my country, we firmly assert that each country should customize its approach to the Cairo Population Document in alignment with its specific demographic realities, particularly concerning fertility rates and population aging.

I wish also to bring to your attention the serious issue of Unilateral Coercive Measures. These unlawful measures not only negatively impact the well-being of the Iranian population and their rights to life, health and access to essential medication and healthcare, but also hinder the achievement of national development goals. We call on the international community to condemn these actions and demand their immediate cessation.

Moreover, Iran has generously hosted millions of refugees and foreign displaced persons for over four decades, providing them with the same services as our citizens despite facing the harshest unilateral sanctions and lacking effective international support.

**Madam Chair**

In conclusion, I emphasize the vital importance of respecting the family unit and reaffirm the sovereign right of each nation to formulate and implement its population, education, and development policies in alignment with national laws and cultural contexts. We believe that the family unit comprising a man, a woman and their children, serves as the cornerstone of the society, with its stability and cohesion directly influencing the well-being, education, health and socio-economic circumstances of individuals and societies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to share its experiences related to population and development with all countries to help avoid similar challenges.

Thank you