



Statement
by
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Excellency Ambassador Gonzalo Koncke, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York/

Mr. Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

It is a great pleasure to address you at this 47th session of the Commission on Population, and Development on behalf of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Program of Action, which was adopted by 179 governments including Bangladesh at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. I like to reiterate Bangladesh's commitment to the principles, goals and objectives set out in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. The implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 is crucial for the eradication of poverty as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The population issues must continue to be addressed in a comprehensive manner as outlined in the ICPD Programme of Action and should be placed at the center of the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda.

In the intervening years since ICPD, Bangladesh has made considerable progress in relation to the ICPD goals. By putting people's empowerment at the heart of national development agenda, Bangladesh is marching forward and aspires to join the ranks of the Middle Income Countries by 2021, the 50th year of its independence. The inclusive economic growth in Bangladesh at a rate of over 6 percent for the past decade resulted in impressive poverty reduction from 56.7 percent in 1991 to 26 percent in 2013.

Significant advances were also made in relation to women's opportunities, women's empowerment and women's role in public participation. Bangladesh has already achieved gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment. In secondary education we have 53% girls and 47% boys. Women's participation in the formal and informal economy as well as in political processes has increased significantly. For example, while only 7% women were engaged in regular jobs in 1990s, now it went up and 12,000 female candidates have been elected in local elections in 2014. We are witnessing a silent but clearly visible revolution of women empowerment in Bangladesh almost in every sector. These achievements are not by accident but owing to well-planned innovative and targeted approaches and of course lead by government's commitment.

On the health front, the maternal mortality rate declined by 65% to 194 from 554 in 1994. Total fertility rate reduced by half from 5.3 in 1994 to 2.3 now, without any mandatory programmes but through public awareness programmes. We have reduced the unmet need for family planning to 12%, one of the lowest among LDCs and in South Asia. Child mortality reduced by 72%.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh faces many challenges. Rapidly growing population and young age structure, rapid urbanization, international migration are some of them. To address these issues the government is working to strengthen institutions to ensure necessary capacity for effective integration of population dynamics into development planning. Moreover, the Government is committed to improving the quality of human settlements,

including the living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers in the context of poverty eradication so that all people have access to basic services, housing, water and sanitation, health, education and mobility.

Mr. Chair, within last two decades migration has embarked as one of the most active contributor in the population dynamics. Bangladesh acknowledges and attaches high importance to the contribution made by migrants and migration to development in countries of origin, transit and destination. Bangladesh strongly believes that safe migration will contribute significantly for economic and social prosperity, and migrants' rights, therefore, must be enforced.

Only 32% deliveries are attended by skilled providers with wide disparities between the poor and the rich. The Government of Bangladesh gives highest priority to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity by strengthening health systems and thereby ensuring universal access to quality prenatal care, skilled attendance at birth, emergency obstetric care, and postnatal care for all women, including those living in rural and remote areas. We also provide widespread and high-quality information and counseling on full range of affordable, accessible, quality contraceptive methods and ensure access to both contraceptive knowledge and commodities .

Bangladesh is also committed to decrease violence against women by enacting appropriate legislations as well as by raising awareness. The Government of Bangladesh is first trying to end gender violence and secondly working to strengthen the health sector response to gender based violence and ensuring that all survivors of gender-based violence have immediate access to critical health care services.

Bangladesh is also working for reducing child marriage and the adolescent fertility rate. This is an important development agenda particularly for Bangladesh, a country with about a quarter of its total population consisting of adolescents and more than one third of population being in the age group of young people 10-24. The Government has taken varieties of steps to eradicate child marriages through integrated multi-sector strategies and through the enforcement of the Child Marriage Restraint Act.

In closing, I would like to thank all relevant UN agencies, particularly UNFPA civil societies and NGOs, who are working in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh for achieving success in many fields particularly in reducing maternal and infant mortality, achieving gender parity in school enrollment, and women empowerment.

Notwithstanding that the conference had a positive impact on poverty eradication and economic development, considerable challenges and gaps still remain, including those that are a result of the economic and financial crisis, that have to be addressed in order to attain the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) . This is why today's meeting is an important and timely event in order to recommit ourselves to the attainments of the objectives embodied in ICPD. We need to continue our strong collaboration for addressing the gaps and unfinished agendas.

I thank you all.