

# EGYPT



# مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
to the United Nations  
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة  
لدى الأمم المتحدة  
نيويورك

**Address by H.E Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil  
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations  
Before the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population & Development**

**Agenda Item 4: "General debate on national experience in population matters:  
Assessment of the Status of Implementation of the Programme of Action  
of the International Conference on Population and Development"**

New York, 8 April 2014

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**Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Egypt aligns its position with the positions expressed by Bolivia, Kenya and Oman, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the African Group and the Arab Group respectively.

Twenty years ago in Cairo, representatives of 179 governments crafted a delicately balanced, yet comprehensive document that remains to this day the international reference on the crucial issues of population and development: The Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The remarkable Cairo consensus built in 1994 represented a turning point in addressing the inter-linkages between population and development. Its spirit of tolerance has stood the test of time. The unanimous extension of the Programme of Action beyond 2014 bears testament to the enduring relevance of its goals and objectives, and is a clear recognition of the urgent need to speed up its implementation.

Egypt holds dearly to the Cairo Programme of Action and is firmly committed to its implementation beyond 2014. In doing so, we are not losing sight of the reason behind its inception: to improve the lives of our peoples, especially our women, youth, elderly and migrants; and ensure a life of dignity and prosperity for each one of them.

Today, as we assess the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action and examine how best to address the remaining gaps, I would like to stress a few points:

1. As the most populous country in the Arab world, and the most densely inhabited nation in North Africa, Egypt considers population issues a national priority of utmost importance. Our new constitution adopted in January 2014 guarantees, especially in article 41, that population issues remain at the heart of our national sustainable development policies. Strategies are being developed and implemented to ensure that instead of straining our resources, each one of our people is able to fully realize his potential, and in the process enable national developmental gains.

2. At the national level, the government is in the process of elaborating a 2015-2030 population strategy to ensure that population issues are integrated within sectorial policies on education, youth and health. The capacity of governmental institutions that can support population and development activities, such as the National Council for Women, the National Population Council and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, is also being strengthened.
3. We cannot discuss population and development issues without mentioning those who constitute the majority in most developing countries. I refer here to young people. They account to almost a third of our 7+ billion world, and make up around 55% of the Arab population and more than 20% of the population of Africa. Yet, youth cannot be regarded as just a percentage. The events in Egypt and the region over the past three years have shown that young people carry the voice of their nation. They are the agents of change. They are, as the Cairo Programme of Action eloquently puts it: "the world's future human resources". That is why we are implementing national policies to harness the benefit of our youthful population bulge and turn it into a window of opportunity. Youth perspectives must be better integrated in population and development processes, nationally and globally.
4. Much progress has been achieved over the past twenty years of implementation of the Programme of Action. But many gaps remain. Renewed high-level political commitment to the Programme of Action is essential to ensure its full implementation. But political will is not sufficient if not accompanied by proper means of implementation. GA resolution 65/234, which extended the Cairo consensus, calls for "new and additional resources for developing countries from all available funding mechanisms". I urge our development partners and the international financial institutions to act accordingly.
5. Egypt encourages all relevant stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations and the private sector to actively contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action. The expertise and resources they bring to the table are invaluable.
6. Egypt hosted the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development in June 2013. Its outcome reflects the development challenges and population dynamics of a changing Arab World, and provides the countries of the region guidance on how to ensure full implementation of the Programme of Action in the years ahead.
7. To successfully address the remaining gaps of the Programme of Cairo, we must preserve the tactful overall balance it reflects. We must also remain committed to the sovereignty clause that underlines it, by fully respecting the national laws and development priorities of each of our countries, and appreciating our religious and cultural diversity. We must also cherish the values we hold in common. Trying to impose one's priorities or value system on the other is morally unacceptable. It will also derail progress in implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, and threatens the hard gained 1994 consensus.

**Mr. Chair,**

In his opening statement at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 the then UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali said "delegates must be highly respectful of cultures and beliefs, and such tolerance must be shown in the strongest possible way". These words hold true today more than ever.

**I thank you for your attention.**