



FJI NATIONAL STATEMENT AT THE 47TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

New York, 11 April, 2014

Mr. Chairman

At the outset, allow me to align Fiji's national statement with that delivered by Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China, and by the Cook Islands on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States. The latter outlined the priority areas for the Pacific SIDS in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman, Fiji supported the outcomes of the Asia Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok last year, which fed into the operational review of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development presented in the Secretary-General's report contained in document E/CN.9/2014/4. The regional outcomes document, as well as the Pacific's Moana Declaration on population and development, addressed many issues of importance to my country. These included issues that are fundamental to the Programme of Action, such as the need to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support; the need to further reduce maternal and child mortality; and the adoption of a rights-based approach in implementing policies and programmes on adolescent and young people's health, sexual and reproductive health and child health. Taking these and other issues into account, it behooves us now to address the gaps in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action identified in the global operational review, in order to make these the focus of work by the lead agencies in partnerships with governments and relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman, Fiji is a group of over 300 islands, with a population that is at once highly concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas, while also being dispersed in remote outlying islands. It is a small island developing state facing existential challenges posed by climate change, while developing and implementing 21st century sustainable development policies and programmes. The juxtaposition of such stark situations in a small island developing state brings with it unique challenges for policy formulation and implementation.

The effect of climate change and natural disasters has a significant negative impact not only on the economy of the country but also presents population dynamic challenges. Affected families can be reduced to poverty and can be subject to increased domestic violence and sexual violence in displaced persons, leading to unintended pregnancies. The availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services thus becomes a major issue, in particular the special needs of the most vulnerable and excluded, whose needs must be attended to in development plans. Fiji has put in place a number of inclusive measures and strategies to help address such issues, including the Reproductive Health Policy 2011 and the recently launched National Gender Policy. This policy provides leverage and support for national reproductive health programs providing comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health services, while also addressing challenges emerging in fast-growing peri-urban areas with evolving family structures and new economic and social pressures.

We also acknowledge the decisive role of national strategic policies in promoting access to services. The promulgation of Fiji's new Constitution in September of 2013 protects a broad range of civil, political and socio-economic rights, including rights to equality and freedom from discrimination for all peoples, including on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Fiji Government has risen to meet these challenges through budgetary provisions in the 2014 budget providing for tuition-free education for all primary and secondary school students, for transportation vouchers for school students from families living in poverty, for social service benefits for families in poverty, as well as care and protection allowances for children living in situations of abject poverty.

Mr. Chairman, having raised the salient key areas, we would also like to stress the importance of timely and appropriately disaggregated and verified data in designing evidence-based programs and development planning. There is an urgent need for adequate resource allocation, and we call for cooperative action and collaboration between governments, relevant UN agencies and other stakeholders to ensure necessary capacity for effective integration of disaggregated and verified population dynamics data.

Mr. Chairman, we recognize the challenge before us in framing a debate to get consensus rather than one that creates divisiveness. We should be looking at means to achieve consensus around issues relating to population and development in the post-2015 development agenda, using as the core of our work the agreed issues within the ICPD Programme of Action, where clearly much remains to be done. There is nothing stopping individual Member States from working with UN agencies where their national priorities include issues that go beyond this programme of action.

Our challenge is how best to include goals and targets on sexual and reproductive health that build on the MDGs, and how to incorporate a rights-based approach in this context, bearing in mind the differences within the UN Membership on such issues as sexual and reproductive rights. We would need goals with concrete targets, and these can only be achieved if there is consensus around the relevant issues.

In this context, Mr. Chairman, Fiji will work with the lead agencies in the implementation of the ICDP Programme of Action to address its priority areas, particularly where either the global review has found gaps in implementation, or our own national analyses have found greater needs. Further, we acknowledge the good work of this Commission and we are committed to working with the agencies and colleague Member States in a constructive manner to achieve an outcome to this CPD that will help build momentum to the Special Session of the General Assembly on 22 September this year.

I thank you Mr. Chairman