

Statement of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

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

Before

The 47th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development

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Your Excellency Ambassador Gonzalo Koncke,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you and the Bureau members on your election to the Forty-Seventh Session of the Commission on Population and Development. I would also like to thank you as well as the members of the Forty-Seventh Session for your efforts to advance the population and development agenda.

Jordan looks forward with interest to the formulation of the population and development agenda beyond 2014, that is, after 20 years on the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 1994. The ICPD review coincides with the end of the Millennium Development Goals, which constitute the instrument for setting effective policies through the articulation of a unified global vision about population issues and their integration into the global post 2015 development agenda and their translation into regional and national programmes of action.

Mr. Chairman,

Jordan acknowledges the work that has gone into producing an ICPD at 20-year review report as called for by General Assembly Resolution 65/234. We seize this opportunity to welcome the comprehensive framework it has identified to enhance individual capabilities and resilience and ensure sustainable development. We support the Review's main conclusion that investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across multiple sectors and throughout the life-course is the foundation of sustainable development.

Once again, Jordan renews its political and development commitment to the implementation of the Program of Action of ICPD Beyond 2014 and commits itself to the full implementation of the Cairo Declaration issued in 2013 which constitutes the plan of action for the Arab region. We, in Jordan, have embraced the people-centered agenda of the ICPD and attached priority to safeguarding human rights, and the rights of women and young people as the basis of the well-being and sustainable development. In light of our national priorities and socio-economic characteristics, Jordan has worked to translate the principles of the ICPD Program of Action into national policies, strategies and plans, such as the National Population Strategy 1996-2020 and National plans for Reproductive Health and Family Planning for 2003-2017. In addition, population issues were integrated into the Kingdom's development plans. These efforts have contributed to improving the development indicators in Jordan, particularly those related to the Millennium Development Goals.

But sustaining these achievements is adversely affected by the flows of forced immigrations to Jordan, specifically the forced immigration of Syrians because of the internal conditions in Syria during the past three years and the political instability in the surrounding Arab region. The influx of migrants into Jordan has negatively affected Jordan's development efforts, imposed unforeseen costs on its financial resources and increased the pressure on Jordan's infrastructure, public facilities and social services.

Since 2011, Jordan has received, and is still receiving, a large wave of forced refugees from Syria. The number of Syrians currently living in Jordan by the end of March of this year was around 1.3 million, of whom around (587,000) were registered as refugees (according to

estimates by the UNHCR). It is expected that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan will reach eight hundred thousand by the end of 2014.

It is worth mentioning that 80% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan live outside camps. The Syrian crisis has imposed demographic realities on Jordan that will have a profound impact on Jordan's demographic transition scenario and the potential benefit from its demographic opportunity. The crisis has boosted Jordan's population growth. The Syrians who are currently living in Jordan account for 16% of the total inhabitants of Jordan, most of whom are women and children.

In addition to the high financial cost that has resulted from the sudden increase in Jordan's population size, which has already affected priority national programs, the estimated additional costs of hosting the Syrian refugees was 2.1 billion \$US for 2013 and 3.2 billion \$US for 2014, whereas the actual international aid that Jordan has received to support the Syrian refugees amounted to only 777 million US dollar (not more than 15% of their real cost). It is imperative that the international community honor its commitments towards Jordan and provide sufficient support that will help Jordan bear the additional burdens resulting from receiving this huge number of refugees. Jordan cannot turn its back to its humanitarian obligations; however, it also can no longer continue to ignore the calls and fears of its citizens pertaining to the threats that these additional responsibilities have inflicted on its national security, development projects and socioeconomic stability.

The growing number of refugees, their vulnerabilities and impact on host countries underscore the importance of addressing population dynamics as well as securing place and mobility which are among the five pillars in the forward looking agenda of ICPD Beyond 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

I want to summarize some of the challenges and priorities in the field of population and development which have come out of our national discussions and reports. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has witnessed substantial changes in its demographic characteristics, moving from high to lower fertility levels and approaching the stage of demographic transition that includes a demographic opportunity, where the proportion of children under 15 decreases, while the proportion of population in the productive ages increases. Nevertheless, the continued growth in the number of youth in Jordan at a rate that exceeds the rates of economic growth will lead to shrinking employment opportunities and undermine the expected potential benefits from the demographic opportunity peak in 2030, due to fertility stagnation and the continued flow of migrants into Jordan, particularly from Syria.

We, therefore, reiterate the need for attention to be given to the provision of health, including maternal and newborn health, and sexual and reproductive health services more broadly. Attention must also be given to education, including comprehensive reproductive and sexual health education and other social services to youth and to facilitate their access to employment and economic opportunities. Decisive steps should be taken to prevent child marriage, keep girls in school, enhance the rights of women and children in the family and protect women from all forms of violence. Such investment in human capital will reduce poverty, strengthen the links between educational attainment and labor market needs, enhance vocational and technological training ensure decent employment and increase youth political and civil participation.

Mr. Chairman,

Jordan renews its own commitment to the importance of deliberate action for promoting sexual and reproductive health, including family planning programs, through the provision of quality information and services, especially to the marginalized groups in order to reach the peak of the demographic window of opportunity by 2030 and sustain our achievements under the fourth and fifth MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

Jordan reaffirms the importance of the continued promotion of gender equality women empowerment and ensuring their full participation in public life. Despite the increase in women's education, their economic participation remains low at no more than 14.1%, in addition to their low political participation and the fewer opportunities they have to access and control their resources. We need to make sure that legislations and policies are supportive to women and all possible measures are taken to promote the role of civil society as partners with the government in achieving sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Jordan also emphasizes the importance of making more efforts to care for the elderly, recognize their needs, safeguard their rights, capitalize on their contribution to development through viable social policies and programs.

We also emphasize the need to exert more effort towards improving the life of persons with disabilities to ensure a dignified life for them through the adoption of policies and various rehabilitation programs that can help achieve their full integration in societies.

Mr. Chairman,

We emphasize the importance of continued action for taking the appropriate measures to address the environmental challenges manifested in the scarcity of water and energy resources, climate changes, desertification, land degradation, droughts, waste management as well their negative impact on food security and prevalence of diseases. Jordan looks forward to the future and expects international support that can help it make sustained development choices in many fields such as renewable energy; water treatment and desalination including effective practices that can enhance energy efficiency and efforts to face the climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I want to highlight that good governance is a precondition to the promotion of sustainable development, social security, equality and fighting poverty. Finally, I call upon the international community and regional entities to play a more active role in enhancing peace and security in the Arab region if development achievements are to be sustained. Jordan looks forward to contributing to the negotiations on the draft resolution presented by the Chairman of the Commission. We expect the outcome to recognize the regional review outcomes and the findings and recommendations of the ICPD beyond 2014 review report. We also believe that the outcome must recognize that these matters link with the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Thank you.

