



## United Nations Forty-seventh Commission on Population and Development

New York, USA  
7-11 April 2014

---

### **Statement Delivered on behalf of the World Health Organization**

Mr Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to present this statement on behalf of the World Health Organization.

The World Health Organization recognizes the crucial role of sexual and reproductive health on overall health of the populations and sustainable development, and welcomes the focus of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on assessment of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

We congratulate UNFPA in leading the global operational review of implementation of the Programme of Action in an all-inclusive manner. The results of the review provide important insights and guidance on the progress made, remaining gaps and areas needing more focus in further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014.

Improved sexual and reproductive health is a key pillar of the overall health, empowerment, and human rights of individuals and sustainable development of societies. Ill-health from causes related to sexual and reproductive health, including too many, too early and too frequent pregnancies remains a major cause of death and disability among women and girls particularly in low-income countries. Poor sexual and reproductive health contributes significantly to poverty, limiting socio-economic development. Conversely, achieving sexual and reproductive health empowers individuals and communities to participate in economic development.

The 20-year review of the ICPD Programme of Action has highlighted various areas where it remains an unfinished agenda. As governments meet to assess performance, it is important to be reminded of the comprehensive sexual and reproductive health agenda enshrined in the Programme of Action. Systematic

consideration of both health and human rights evidence must be incorporated into a measured response to advance the sexual and reproductive health, and fully achieve the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. This is essential not only for advancing the ICPD agenda beyond 2014 but also for ensuring that the post-2015 agenda and the new international framework speak to the needs and aspirations of people around the world. To achieve this, attention must be paid to addressing inequalities, ensuring quality of care and enhancing accountability. In focusing these key aspects, it is crucial to strengthen evidence and knowledge on effective interventions, strategies and practices.

Mr Chair, my Department, hosting the co-sponsored Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, HRP, realizes the urgency with which the gaps and have to be addressed. HRP, as a global entity for research, research synthesis and capacity strengthening in sexual and reproductive health, responds to the needs of low and middle income settings. By identifying needs, testing interventions, and evaluating mechanisms for delivering evidence-based interventions through implementation research, HRP delivers much needed evidence base for supporting policies, programmes and delivery of health care for accelerated progress in universal access to reproductive health and advancing the ICPD agenda.

It is necessary to expedite our efforts to turn the various commitments and global strategies into reality for individuals, especially for women and young people. Our response must respond to the reality many of these individuals face for example, in terms having unplanned pregnancies often because of limited and no access to contraception, or sexual abuse or coercion; in terms of failing to survive a pregnancy or childbirth; or in terms of perishing from complications of unsafe abortions. Addressing these will require in the first instance supporting people to fulfil their fertility intentions, which in turn will advance development.

I thank you Mr Chairman.