

Check against Delivery



**United Nations Commission on
Population and Development**

A Society for all Ages

Closing Statement

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNFPA, I wish to express our sincere thanks to you Mr. Chairman and to the Members of the Bureau for your able leadership of the 40th session of the Commission on Population and Development.

We would like to thank the distinguished delegates for their active participation and valuable contribution to the work of the Commission. A special thanks goes to the facilitator, Mr. Thomas Gass, for his productive steering of the informal consultations and hard work that went into the drafting and negotiating of the resolution and the decisions.

We thank Member States for their support for the mandate and role of UNFPA in supporting countries to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

We also thank our three keynote speakers for the excellent presentations which sparked interesting discussions. Thanks also go to the Secretariat and our colleagues at the Population Division for their contribution to the 40th Session of the Commission.

Mr. Chairman, this week the Commission addressed an issue which concerns us all: changing age structures of populations. Since countries are at different stages of the demographic transition and experience different social and economic conditions, the change is more pronounced in some countries than in others. However, the experiences shared by the distinguished delegates clearly show that all countries are undergoing some change in their age structures which has an impact on development.

At the center of development are people. At each stage of life, people face different needs and can make different contributions to society. We need a multi-faceted approach to ensure that all people – children, youth, adults and older persons – can reach their full potential and realize their human rights. We must be there for persons of all ages and throughout their life cycle. And we must include both young and old as partners in the development process. Our keynote speakers pointed out that ageing matters and that investing in young people is essential.

Mr. Chairman, a clear message emerged: we must build a society for all ages, one in which the needs of all groups are met. There was a common thread among all the experiences and aspirations shared by delegates. Education and health emerged as issues of particular importance to meet the needs of the young. Decent employment and family friendly policies that supported combining work and parenting were among the issues of particular relevance to the working age population. Provision of social safety nets, pensions and quality health care, and recognition of the contributions of older persons emerged as significant issues associated with population ageing. And gender concerns, including violence against women, and human rights were issues that needed to be addressed for all age groups. Intergenerational ties to bridge the divide between young

and old were seen as vital in building a society for all ages. Again and again, the importance of migration in an era of changing age structures was highlighted.

During debate, delegates called for the promotion of policy dialogue, the reinforcement of capacity building, and the exchange of good practices to ensure that the changing age structures of populations can contribute to development. The demographic bonus was seen as a window of opportunity that, together with appropriate policies, should be utilized to help improve the quality of life for all.

Many countries elaborated the progress already made to improve the lives of older persons since the Second World Assembly on Ageing five years ago. Some have indeed come a long way. Others shared their plans for implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. And still others focused on addressing the needs of youth because that age group predominated in their population.

Mr. Chairman, it was also pointed out that, despite the increase in the flows of financial resources for implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, additional funding is necessary to meet current needs and costs which have grown considerably since the Cairo targets were agreed upon in 1994. UNFPA is particularly pleased to see this urgent need reflected in the resolutions of the 40th Session of the Commission. And we are committed to promoting the right to sexual and reproductive health as we move forward.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that UNFPA will continue to support governments and civil society in the areas of population and development, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and gender equality to meet the needs of all individuals in society, both young and old. We look forward to working with Member States and the Population Division to ensure a society for all ages.

Thank you.