



Permanent Mission  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the United Nations  
New York

## **Statement**

**at the  
Debate on Actions in follow-up to the  
recommendations of the International Conference on  
Population and Development**

**(agenda item 3)**

**during the 45th Session of the United Nations  
Commission for Population and Development (CPD)**

**23 April 2012**

*(check against delivery)*

Mr. Chairman,  
distinguished delegates,  
dear colleagues,

Let me first of all congratulate all members of the Bureau on their election. I would like to assure you that we look forward to working with you towards a positive and constructive outcome of the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Future demographic change will have a distinct impact on Germany. While demographic changes affect the entire European continent, the impact on Germany and the related consequences will be exceptional. Over the next ten to twenty years, three major trends will occur in Germany: Our population will shrink, will be older and will be more diverse. These trends will significantly influence many areas of our lives.

The consequences of the demographic change cannot be fully assessed. However, it will offer opportunities for individuals and society as a whole to shape the future and allow a thorough modernization of our policy. Germany is pioneering this development: So far, there is no model for such an adaptation, neither in history nor in other countries. We are certain, however, that we will maintain and increase prosperity, self-confidence, domestic peace and cohesion in the coming decades if we set the right course now.

This is why we have taken on the task of meeting the challenges posed by demographic change by implementing a comprehensive

and broad initiative. To take stock of the anticipated population trends, we adopted a Report on the Demographic Situation and Future Development of Germany in October 2011, which includes projections of demographic changes and their impact on individual policy areas. The report also describes the measures already taken by the Federal Government and identifies further action needed.

Our Government is taking another important step at the moment: This spring, we will present our demographic strategy defining the most important areas for policy action in the coming years.

We are living longer than any previous generations, and we want to make use of the opportunities offered by this increased life expectancy. Therefore, the aim of our demographic strategy is to give all individuals the opportunity to develop their individual potential, contribute to society and achieve their notion of a meaningful life. To do so, our Government intends to adapt conditions in all areas of life to the demands of demographic change.

Even if the traditional notion of the family is changing and is becoming more diverse, the family as a nucleus of society will remain the foundation of a forward-looking community worth living in. Attitudes towards the acceptance and promotion of families and children need to change, as do attitudes concerning older people and their ability to contribute to and participate in society.

To stress the importance of these opportunities for individuals and society as a whole, the German Government's demographic strategy

initially addresses three priorities: strengthening families, promoting health and motivation at work, and living an independent and self-determined life at older ages. The strategy subsequently addresses three cross-cutting themes: maintaining quality of life in rural and urban areas, ensuring growth and prosperity as well as the state's ability to cope with upcoming challenges.

As society is ageing, education becomes increasingly important to guarantee the supply of skilled young workers and to maintain economic growth and prosperity. This is why our Government intends to promote education at every age, starting at early childhood and followed by reading and language promotion, additional educational opportunities for young people, better occupational training and higher education as well as continuing education during the life course.

Germany is aware that we can only successfully manage demographic change if all governmental bodies, social and civil society actors take responsibility and work together.

Our Government considers demographic change an issue to be addressed also by international cooperation. Many of our partner countries are undergoing a demographic transition, with societies of large proportions of young people, which are a result of high fertility rates.

If we jointly manage to create the right environment for demographic transition, our partner countries will be able to facilitate sustainable development. To that end, we have adopted clear and ambitious

targets, especially in relation to education, family planning, reproductive and maternal health, and the promotion of women's, children's and young people's rights. As the principle of free choice is central to our understanding of human rights, we hold that it is everyone's fundamental right to determine freely the number and spacing of their children.

A well-educated and healthy young generation can be a key factor for economic growth and prosperity and it can help to advance social change.

The German Government would like to offer to share its experiences concerning demographic change with the international community and is prepared to assist interested countries on how to find ways to meet their own challenges of social change.

Thank you!