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Statement on behalf of the LDCs by H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal, at the Forty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development on Agenda item 4: General debate on national experience in population matters: adolescents and youth (New York, 25 April 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). At the outset, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of the Forty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development. I assure you of our full support and cooperation in discharging your important responsibility. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the comprehensive report on this agenda item.

We attach high significance to this year's session of the Commission on Population and Development. We welcome this year's theme "Adolescents and Youth", and we believe that it is indeed appropriate in the world with 1.8 billion of adolescents and youth. The adolescents and youth can play an important role in achieving development and economic growth of their communities and can build a better future for each and every one of us.

Mr. Chairman,

About 60 per cent of the population of least developed countries is under the age of 25, compared with 46 per cent in other developing countries. Large youth populations are an asset for least developed countries, and should have the opportunity to participate fully in economic, social and political life. Youth populations' potential should be maximized, including through full access to education and productive employment. On the contrary, if they are not provided with the necessary education and skills and not employed, they could be a force of destabilization as well. We have to consider that the proportion of the youth in LDCs will grow much higher, compared to the global youth by 2040 and 2100.

The report of the Secretary General, E/CN.9/2012/4 rightly states that "The adolescents and youth of today are central to realizing development that is sustainable and equitable. Greater investments in their education, health and labour market opportunities can shape the well-being of tomorrow's adults and, in the process, ultimately narrow the gaps between countries with regard to human development." We are committed to develop policies and programs for supporting youth access to secondary and higher education, vocational training and productive

employment, and health-care services, especially to young women and girls in the LDCs. The report also highlights that the proportion of the contraceptive prevalence and unmet need is higher in Asia and Africa in particular in LDCs. Similarly, we are concerned at the high level of maternal mortality and prevalence of HIV/AIDs in LDCs, despite the global commitments and efforts.

Despite progress made on many fronts, more than a billion people in the world still live in miserable conditions. Moreover, the LDCs among them continue to face severe challenges in providing health care services. We have seen that maternal and child mortality rates are highest in LDCs. Similarly, majority of LDCs have high fertility rates. The child and maternal health related challenges also remain very high. The proportion of youth population in these countries is one of the highest. We must make sure that there is supportive relationship between the population growth and economic development by promoting the potentials of the LDC population through their overall development. We need a stronger and targeted global cooperation and support particularly when we look at the challenges and the capacity constraints of the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are in the 17th year of the implementation of the Program of Action of ICPD, there are still many challenges and gaps in terms of attention, action and funding. We therefore reiterate our call upon our development partners to provide financial and technical assistance to support least developed countries' policies and programs that provide economic opportunities and productive employment to youth, and to support formal and non-formal education systems in least developed countries for capacity-building and skill development of youth and adolescent through financial and technical assistance.

We also believe that the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to be held in June this year, in Rio, Brazil will also take necessary measures in stressing and addressing the problems and challenges relating to population and development and their interplay. Sustainable development and poverty alleviation has to give due priority to population dynamics and in particular the challenges of adolescents and youth, who are the future of the nation.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge the significant role of UNFPA in promoting and ensuring access to and utilization of health services, including through voluntary family programs and community health workers, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, strengthening integrated health management information system and other related activities. We need to provide the organization with necessary resources and capacity so that it can deliver on so many important activities that it is engaged in our countries.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.