



TUNISIE

Statement by
Pr. Habiba Ben Romdhane
President Director General
National Board for Family and Population
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Vérifier à la lecture

**Mr Chairman
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates and guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development for all the efforts they have made for the preparation of this session and to express to you my happiness to be among you and share with you the Tunisian experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health for youth and adolescents.

**Mr Chairman
Distinguished delegates and guests**

Our country is living today an important political shift after the glorious revolution of 14th January which was conducted by its youth in their fight for justice, dignity and freedom. This pushed all of us to be more attentive to the aspirations and needs of this group of the Tunisian population in order to ensure to them the ways of success to take the torch of development and move towards prosperity and progress. In this framework and in an effort to contribute to the achievement of these aspirations and to respond to the needs, the National Office for Family and Population will work to ensure the right of young people and adolescents in sexual and reproductive health.

Since the beginning of the nineties and after the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the Tunisian government has given special attention to adolescents and youth in all its development policies as a result of new factors including the development of society, the change in demographic structure, the emergence of new behaviours and mainly the demographic weight of youth, which represents one-third of the Tunisian population.

In this context, the interventions has been expanded to enroot a culture of rational and responsible sexuality based on the awareness of the needs related to reproductive health and supported by a preventive and integrated multi-dimensional plan aiming at :

- Facilitating the access to information about sexual and reproductive health and translate it into responsible health behaviour.
- Providing a good environment to spread the dialogue between the youth about dangerous behaviour.
- Facilitating the access to reproductive health services for the different categories of the youth.
- Integrating the reproductive health services for adolescents and youth among the reproductive health services provided by all the health centres including school and university medical health centres.
- Training service providers in the field of communication, education and medical services in the youth centres.
- Reinforcing cooperation and partnership with all the sectors and organizations working for the youth.
- Extending the activities to reach other counselling units in the youth centres.

It is important to mention that counselling and psychological care are major components in the wide range of services provided by the National Board for Family and population's regional centres through their psychologists who are helping in:

- Prevention from behavioural disorders in adolescents, especially risk behaviours
- Adoption of healthy sexual life by adolescents and young people
- Prevention from all types of addiction and strengthen the psychological balance in young people
- Reinforcement of dialogue within the family and improvement of the relationship between the peer and with the parents
- Adolescent's psychological and social conditions
- Contribution to the reduction of school failure
- Dissemination of psychological counseling before marriage
- Establishing a culture of non-violence and gender equity among the youth

To achieve these goals, the National Board for Family and Population has created centres responding to the needs in sexual and reproductive health of the adolescents and youth aged between 15 and 29 years. The Board established the "**youth friendly centres**" in 22 governorates out of 24 in addition to other different centres in the country. These centres match with the taste of the youth and are providing a personal welcome which encourages the young person to enjoy his right in health and benefit from the educational and medical information along with the psychological counselling. These services are private, quick and free of charge and do not consider the difference in gender. Besides, the National Board for Family and Population provides services of counselling, listening to youth and adolescents' related issues and basic health care. The Board is also advocating to promote its interventions in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

The strengthening of adolescents and youth participation in all levels of the program to guarantee their rights and benefit from health and reinforce their knowledge to adopt a protected sexual and reproductive behaviour, the Board used an innovative educational approach "**From Youth to Youth**" commonly known as "**Y-Peer Education**" to spread the right information between the youth with the same age and to listen to their problems and fight the wrong ideas that threaten their lives.

Mr Chairman

Distinguished Delegates and Guests

While being honoured in 2004 by the United Nations Fund for Population as a Arab Region Training Centre in the field of Y-Peer education thanks to the successes of the programs and the results achieved, the new challenges highlighted by the revolution, call us for further attention to adolescents and youth, especially those living in remote areas and among disadvantaged groups in order to achieve social justice and to reduce regional gaps.

We are determined to establish new cultures of freedom, democracy, equality and gender equity and respect for human rights, especially among children, adolescents and young people. This is a national effort to which all living forces, partners from public and private and stakeholders in the country shall contribute and work for.

Thank you for your attention.