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**Statement by
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ON GENDER ISSUES AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**Commission on Population and Development
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Madame Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This week, following its long tradition, the Commission has considered issues that are fundamental for the wellbeing of people and are therefore crucial for the human, social and economic development of nations - namely, the many ways in which the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action can contribute to the achievement of the international agreed development goals. The statements made by Member States during this session have validated the conclusion that population issues, especially those revolving around sexuality, reproduction and health, have major relevance for the attainment of crucial development goals. Furthermore, participants stressed that the universal enjoyment of human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, particularly action to empower women and ensure gender equality, must be the basis for action.

In 2005, at the World Summit, Governments committed themselves to ensuring universal access to reproductive health by the year 2015. This goal, which echoes that enshrined in the Programme of Action, is fully consistent with a rights-based approach to human development. It demands action on a number of fronts, including the improvement of maternal and child health; providing access to family planning; preventing and treating sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and taking measures to stop harmful traditional and customary practices as well as all other forms of violence against women.

Today, the Commission has recommitted itself to the attainment of universal reproductive health and has provided clear guidance on how to pursue the measures necessary to achieve that goal in a balanced and holistic manner. Furthermore, the Commission has recognized that funding levels have to be rebalanced in order to ensure that progress is made in all components relevant to reproductive health, and it has emphasized the urgency of ensuring that funding for the attainment of universal reproductive health be safeguarded from the effects of the economic and financial crisis. In this way, the Commission has laid a solid foundation not only for continued action at the national level but also for fostering the international partnership necessary to achieve the internationally agreed development goals.

I should also note that the President of the Economic and Social Council has taken note of the work and the rich content of the deliberations of the Commission during this and previous sessions. The exchange of views of Commission Members with the President of ECOSOC has already contributed to the preparations of the Annual Ministerial Review that the Economic and Social Council will hold next July on the attainment of the goals related to global public

health I commend you all for the open and frank discussion of the issues that you have conducted this week and to pledge the full support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for your work.

And to conclude, Madame Chairperson, I wish to congratulate you and your colleagues in the Bureau for the care and effort you put in the preparation of this session and for guiding its proceedings so ably. Furthermore, I am sure that Member States will join me in expressing appreciation for the hard work and able leadership of the facilitator of the informal consultations, Mr. Raja Nushirwan.

I also congratulate you, Madame Chairperson, together with the members of the Bureau, for the thoughtfulness and care with which you guided the organization of this session and for efficiently conducting its proceedings.

Congratulations to all, and thank you Madame Chairperson.