

Statement dir DSO, agendapunt 3, Commission on Population and Development (CPD)

Thank you, Chair. I am speaking on behalf of the Netherlands.

Distinguished delegates, colleagues, friends,

Introduction:

The Netherlands very much welcomes and endorses the UN Secretary-Generals reports on the operational review and world demographic trend. In our view the Global Review is a revealing, informative and universal report that has a legitimate base of global data and input of 176 member states. We would like to commend UNFPA for its excellent work in this Review.

We have always been and will be a strong supporter of the full and effective implementation of the ICPD agenda, both in our international cooperation and our national policies. Therefore we were honoured to co-host last year's ICPD Human Rights Conference in the Netherlands.

We are keen advocates of universal sexual and reproductive health and rights, and I hope we can discuss the meaning of those four words, SRHR, during the next few days, in relation with the agenda of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

We should practice what we preach. In this respect we are pleased that the Global Review Report confirms that the Netherlands has one of the lowest abortion rates in the world. In our experience the only way to achieve this was not by criminalizing abortion or making it illegal but by providing access to modern contraception, investing in sexuality education and taking young people's desires seriously. And in the exceptional case a woman or girl in the Netherlands decides to have an abortion, it is safe, legal and easily accessible. With this in mind we fully support the ICPD report's recommendation for countries to revise existing restrictive and punitive abortion laws.

Achievements, but much remains to be done:

Looking back at the last 20 years, the good news is that much has been achieved: we heard several examples earlier this morning. However, there are huge gaps in implementation of the Cairo Agenda and progress is unequal.

Netherlands views

We need to address these gaps and inequalities. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights that we need to protect, respect and fulfil. We believe it is important that

individuals are empowered and enabled to exercise these rights. We need to pay special attention to those left behind in fulfilling the Cairo agenda, with emphasis on women and girls, adolescents and youth, the most disadvantaged and marginalized people, married and unmarried, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender Identity or any other ground.

Young people

Right now the world has the largest population of young people in history. We need to ensure that they have universal access to integrated sexual and reproductive health information and services and to comprehensive sexuality education. To underline our commitment to this issue we have included a youth representative in our delegation.

Child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation are violations of young women's and girls' rights. It deprives them of their health, education and opportunities. It is encouraging to note that there is a growing number of governments and societies worldwide which show commitment to eradicate these practices.

We think it is important to engage men and boys. They play a crucial role in ending gender based violence and realizing gender equality.

HIV/AIDS

Although we are pleased that the number of people that is infected yearly with HIV has fallen, we would like to stress that equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is provided, especially for the most marginalized people, such as sexual minorities, injecting drug users, sex workers.

Accountability/partnerships

We believe that the international community should closely monitor progress on the ICPD agenda. Accountability is key. Furthermore, we promote equal partnerships between relevant stakeholders for the full and effective implementation of this agenda. We acknowledge the role of local communities, traditional and community leaders as well as religious leaders and organizations and welcome their active participation in realizing the ICPD agenda.

Netherlands' commitments/closing remarks:

Chair,

The Netherlands will take its responsibility. We accept ownership of the ICPD review report and will commit ourselves fully to its recommendations and new emerging issues. We urge all countries present and not present to do so as well.

We will continue to advocate for the objectives of the ICPD beyond 2014 to be reflected in the post 2015 development framework. For we believe that fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, social, economic and political equality, gender equality and SRHR are crucial for sustainable development.

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