Launch of *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results*
Thursday, 11 July 2024, 12:30 pm EDT
UN Press Briefing Room, S-237
UN Headquarters, New York

Statement by Mr. Navid Hanif, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Good afternoon, ladies, and gentlemen,
Members of the media,

It is my pleasure to address you on World Population Day, which is being observed this year under the theme, 'Embracing the power of inclusive data towards a resilient and equitable future for all'.

This international day was established following the Day of 5 Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.

Today, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, or UN DESA, is releasing a new report: *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results*.

The report is based on our latest dataset, *World Population Prospects 2024*, the twenty-eighth edition of the United Nations estimates and projections of population at the global, regional, and national levels.

This dataset and report have been among the most referenced or downloaded products of UN DESA over many years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The report comes at a time when the demographic landscape of many countries is changing rapidly, sometimes creating anxiety and confusion.

Due to rapid declines in fertility levels in some of the world's most populous countries, the size of the global population is likely to peak in the mid-2080s from 8.2 billion people in 2024 to around 10.3 billion in the mid-2080s, and then will return to around 10.2 billion by the end of the century. The size of the world's population in 2100 is now expected to be 6 percent lower than or 700 million lower than anticipated decade ago.

This represents a major shift compared to a decade ago with important policy implications for the sustainability of our planet.

For instance, rapid growth is likely to magnify the scale of investments and efforts required to eradicate poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, and ensure universal access to health care, education and other essential services in countries that are already facing severe economic, social, and environmental impediments.

Conversely, rapid population decline in some contexts may require innovative policy responses to address potential macroeconomic, labour market, social protection, and national security ramifications.

One way to address these challenges is by achieving the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This can help avoid the most extreme demographic outcomes. Let me explain with two examples.

First, facilitating a shift towards smaller families in populations that are growing rapidly and where individuals and couples often have more children than they desire.

In countries with rapid population growth, for instance, investing in the education of young people, especially girls, and increasing the age at marriage and first childbearing will have positive repercussions for women's health, educational attainment, and labor force participation.

Second, enabling parents to have larger families if they so desire in populations that are declining and where people often fail to achieve their desired family size.

In countries where fertility is low, providing paid parental leave, flexible work arrangements, affordable childcare, and care for older persons, and promoting

equal household responsibility can boost female labor participation, support families, encourage childbearing, and enhance economic security for all.

These are just two examples of important insights into the relationship between population and sustainable development, which can be used to inform and guide development planning and decision-making.

Such insights are a product of research, which requires reliable data, such as those provided by the *World Population Prospects* data set.

Population data are essential also for evaluating progress and assessing the effectiveness of policies.

Data from the *World Population Prospects* have been widely used to compute national-level indicators as part of the global monitoring of progress towards the SDGs.

Let me conclude by thanking John Wilmoth, Director of UN DESA's Population Division, and his team for their unwavering commitment to maintaining this high-quality data and analytical product, and for ensuring the continuing relevance of the *World Population Prospects*, which is one of UN DESA's crown jewels.

Thank you.