

**Pakistan Statement at the
29th Special Session of General Assembly on “Follow-up to the
International Conference on Population & Development Beyond 2014”
(22 September 2014)**

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening the 29th Special Session of the General Assembly on “Follow-up to the ICPD Beyond 2014”.

We appreciate Secretary-General’s Report A/69/62 and the Index Report of the 47 Session of the Commission on Population and Development. These reports provide useful background for this Special Session.

We commend the role of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in promoting the goals of the Commission on Population and Development. Our partnership with UNFPA dates back to 1971. Together we have successfully implemented seven Country Programs. We commend UNFPA for its technical and financial support to Pakistan. We also acknowledge the role of civil society organizations as valued partners.

Mr. President,

With an estimated 188 million inhabitants, Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. Growing at a rate of around 1.95%, Pakistan’s population is projected to exceed 300 million by 2050, to become the fifth most populous country in the world. For a resource-scarce country like Pakistan, this population explosion has serious implications for the government’s efforts to improve the standard of living and provide basic amenities of life to all sections of the society.

Demographic planning has remained a priority for Pakistan. Pakistan pioneered the launch of Population Program in SAARC region. Successive governments have focused resources on raising awareness, providing healthcare, building capacity and forging alliances for effective implementation of population control strategies. A National Reproductive Health Package was adopted in 2001 to offer family planning services within the comprehensive framework of reproductive health. An explicit National Population Policy was announced in 2002. Nation-wide help lines have been established for counseling to married people. Population and Health related contents have been incorporated in text books. Legislation has been enacted to protect and empower women in social, economic and political spheres.

Since the ICPD in 1994, Pakistan has made significant progress in demographic planning and public health, of which I would particularly highlight the following:

- a. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has trebled from 11.8% in 1990 to 35% in 2013.
- b. Total Fertility Rate has decreased from 5.3 (1990) to 3.8 (2013).
- c. Maternal Mortality Rate has dropped from 490 (1990) to 276 (in 2007).
- d. Population Growth Rate has decreased from 2.6% (1998) to 1.95 (2013).

The administrative control of population programme has been transferred to provinces in 2003. Subsequently, the subject was devolved to provinces for greater efficiency and involvement of local populations. At the federal level, the Ministry of National Health Services and Regulation leads inter-provincial coordination and cooperation at the international level.

Despite these achievements, population control remains a major challenge. There is still an unmet need of at least 20% for family planning services, and there are large variations in access to services between rural and urban populations, rich and the poor. The present Government is aware of these challenges and of the need for a comprehensive response at all levels.

Mr. President,

In the context of the theme of the Special Session 'Follow up to the ICPD Plan of Action - 2014 and beyond, Pakistan wishes to state the following:

First, we commit to completing unfinished agenda of MDGs, especially reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health services.

Second, we are determined to achieve the commitments made by Pakistan under Family Planning 2020, especially reducing unmet need and increasing CPR to 55% by 2020.

Third, we commit to ensuring women's access to reproductive health services in line with Pakistan's constitutional and international commitments.

Fourth, we commit to addressing reproductive and maternal health needs of communities affected by natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reaffirm Pakistan's enduring commitment to the historic ICPD Program of Action, and the vision presented in the report of the Secretary-General. Pakistan also supports to include issues of population planning and welfare in the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

I thank you.

