

**Statement of Mr. John Wilmoth
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**Forty-sixth Session of the
Commission on Population and Development**

New York, 22 April 2013

Mr. Secretary-General,
Ambassador Lupan,
Executive Director Osotimehin,
Assistant Secretary-General Akhtar,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to address the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Earlier this year I assumed the post of Director of the Population Division, within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, or DESA. I had worked previously for the Division from 2005 to 2007, while on leave from the University of California, where I have been teaching since 1990. I have been excited to rejoin the Population Division and its talented staff, and to help carry forward a very important work programme at this crucial moment in history.

I have observed the progress made in the work of the Division in recent years, owing in no small part to Ms. Hania Zlotnik, the previous Director. The staff should be commended for advancing the analytical work of the Division, while also providing substantive support for intergovernmental processes, working collaboratively with various partners and, where possible, engaging in capacity-building activities.

Since my return to the UN, I have been struck in particular by the advancements made in the Division's work on migration, the focus of this year's Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

International migration often provokes strong emotional reactions. Under such circumstances, the Population Division plays a crucial role in providing accurate, timely and unbiased information to the international community about the many facets of migration.

Over the last 6 years, the Population Division has strengthened substantially the evidence base on international migration. The migrant stock database is a prominent example.

For many years the Division has been producing estimates of the number of international migrants residing in all countries of the world. In recent years, however, we have expanded this work, in collaboration with various partners.

With support from UNICEF, we developed methods for estimating the age of migrants, yielding counts of the number of migrant children, youth and adolescents. Such information is critical for programme planning and advocacy.

In collaboration with the World Bank, we have created the largest existing collection of census data on international migrants. Thanks to this Global Migration Database, we are now able to estimate the direction of migratory flows. This additional piece of information, migrants' place of origin, is crucial both for describing migration patterns by region or level of development, and for analysing the impact of international migration on various aspects of development. This groundbreaking work also allows us to improve the migration assumptions used in our world population projections.

Another important activity of the Population Division is the global monitoring of population policies. This line of work has a long history, having begun in the 1960s. Ever since, the Population Division has been providing the international community with up-to-date information on Government views and policies on key population issues, in a biennial publication entitled *World Population Policies*.

Here, too, the work of the Division has expanded in recent years. In addition to information on Government views and policies on immigration and emigration, which we have tracked since the mid 1970s, the most recent revision of this work also gathered information on several additional aspects of international migration policy: for example, policies with regard to irregular migration, naturalization, return migration, dual citizenship, and investments by diaspora communities.

Distinguished delegates,

It is now widely recognized that migration is a powerful force contributing to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Migration broadens the opportunities available to individuals and is widely acknowledged as a crucial means of broadening access to resources and reducing poverty.

As we look forward to the second High-level Dialogue later this year and to next year's Special Session of the General Assembly on ICPD beyond 2014, and as we work to articulate the post-2015 development agenda, we should keep in mind the multiple and powerful impacts of migration on development and human well-being.

No doubt, migration will be a key feature of our globalizing world throughout the twenty-first century. Much work is needed to ensure that countries harness the benefits of migratory movements while minimizing potential negative impacts; that migration is safe, orderly and legal; and, above all, that the human rights of migrants are safeguarded.

The Population Division remains committed to contributing to this discussion by providing essential data and thoughtful analyses. We stand ready to assist Governments, UN entities and others stakeholders as they consider and debate these important topics.

In closing, I would like to wish the Members of the Commission a very successful and productive week of deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
