Good morning Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates

The Post-2015 development agenda will unfold in the midst of structural demographic transformations, coinciding with ambitious aspirations for health, security and justice for present and future generations.

This report, entitled “Monitoring of population programmes, focusing on integrating population issues into sustainable development, including the post-2015 development agenda”, UN Document number E/CN.9/2015/4, highlights 4 key population trends & challenges that will be crucial to the success of the Post-2015 agenda.

1. the mobility and urbanization of the human population;
2. the time-bound opportunity to enable demographic dividends;
3. the continuing centrality of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR);
4. and the critical need to strengthen the generation and use of population data for development.

The human population today is characterized by high mobility – both voluntary and involuntary. This defines the context in which all our efforts to pursue development will necessarily unfold.
Not only did the world become more urban than rural in 2008, but cities & towns today are
gaining an estimated 1.3 million persons per week, and 90% of urban population growth
in the past 20 years is occurring in developing countries.

Urbanization, in itself, offers enormous potential for development, as there is a strong
historic association between urbanization and economic growth. Yet at the same time
inequalities abound in urban spaces… Many urban migrants are young people, seeking
new opportunities for education and work, including young women, many of whom lack
skills or jobs, and many of whom are vulnerable to violence and exploitation. As
urbanization continues, providing safe urban spaces for girls across multiple countries,
strengthening literacy, ensuring their reproductive health, and providing mentoring, more
such efforts are needed.

Beyond voluntary movement to urban areas, there are millions without security of place.
An estimated 28.8 million have been displaced due to conflict, surpassing the prior peak in
1994. Another 32 million have been displaced due to natural disasters, and an uncounted
number are homeless, or suffering forced evictions; far too many people lack security of
place. We all have in memory images from Syria; Ukraine; Central Africa; Philippines…to
name a few.

Given these realities the social protection of people in humanitarian crises, especially
women and girls, is a growing priority for UNFPA, and we are increasing our work to
ensure the safe provision of reproductive health and family planning, and the protection
against inter-personal violence and trauma in complex emergencies.
Young people today offer one of the greatest opportunities for future development. As most countries are naturally transitioning from high to low fertility, a youth bulge is created. Because fewer children will be born after them, this youth bulge will move into working adulthood with fewer dependents, and more opportunity to acquire wealth, savings, and purchasing power, and thereby accelerate economic growth. This is the concept behind the demographic dividend, which is the potential economic benefit that can arise from a high proportion of working-aged adults relative to dependents.

And what actions are needed to harness a “demographic dividend”? A demographic dividend can only occur if countries invest in the empowerment, education, and employment of young people, and assure macroeconomic and labor policies that lead to a major expansion of safe and secure employment; including good governance.

Today, many countries are on the crossover of this potential – with a large young and working age population – especially countries in Africa. But much work is needed to create the enabling conditions for this dividend: increasing the empowerment of girls and women, ensuring universal and high quality education that is tailored to new economic opportunities, and secure employment.

For each country the tailoring of education to new jobs may be unique – as different countries develop their unique resources for economic growth – but for all, the growth in science and technology training is a must. Nine of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the Open Working Group explicitly call for new scientific and technical knowledge and professional capacities for their fulfillment – our task will be to ensure that these new training opportunities are based in the emerging economies of the developing world.
In addition to education, the next generation must have the rights and freedoms, knowledge and services, to decide when and whom to marry, and the timing and number of children, and to bring them into a world where their health is assured. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are the prerequisites for women and girls to enjoy all other rights, including the chance to fully participate in economic life, by whatever path they choose to define their contributions to family and community.

Health cannot be assured without substantial strengthening of the health systems in many of our countries, ensuring universal access to life-saving commodities, prevention and acute care. The lack of an adequate number of skilled health workers has been an obstacle to access and quality for decades – and a major global effort is needed to meet this challenge.

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This report will be incomplete if it does not mention the extreme vulnerability of our World to disease outbreaks and exposing the linkages between human mobility and weak health systems. The Ebola virus disease in West Africa has shown us how much could be the economic and social impacts on individuals, communities and countries.

Finally, let me close with an appeal to all Member States to sow the data revolution in the developing world. In all of our collective reports for this CPD, is the clear message that our countries differ, and tailoring growth to the age and location of your population, your young people, your industrial potential, and demands that each and every country have the capacity to know themselves.
A great deal of data is generated through national surveys, but it continues to be analyzed in far away universities, and not where it’s needed most – in the developing countries themselves, in ministries, and among the political actors planning for the future.

Far greater support to developing countries is needed to build capacity to comprehensively collect, analyze and USE local data for development planning. The young people demanding greater education are the players needed, and with the right training many problems are solved simultaneously – youth are educated, data is used and planning is streamlined to build on national potential and needs.

We believe that the integration of population into Post-2015 planning will enhance the dignity, human rights, health and capabilities of all our people, and ensure sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention

Merci beaucoup