

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates),

We would like to thank the Co-Chairs for their efforts in facilitating the consultations to reach a consensus document, which has just been adopted.

In this regard, we reaffirm one of the most important principles of the program of work of the International Conference on Population and Development, which is the sovereign right of states in implementing their national programs according to their national laws, with full respect to different religious, ethical, and cultural backgrounds of peoples.

We regret to see this document missing basic elements that have been always agreed upon such as the phrase “in accordance with the International Conference on Population and Development and its annexes”, which contain the reservations of participating states at that time.

In the light of the above-mentioned, we would like to refer particularly to the phrases “early marriage” and “sexual and reproductive rights”. In discussing these subjects, we reaffirm the importance of taking into consideration the national, regional, historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of state.

In closing, Madam Chair, we request the inclusion of this statement in the report of this session