

# **Address at the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development**

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Dear Ms. Chairman, representatives, ladies and gentlemen:

Ever since its establishment 50 years ago, UN Commission on Population and Development has been devoted to the global population and development undertaking and made outstanding contributions. Together with UN member states, China has been actively promoting the implementation of "ICPD Programme of Action" and proactively responding to the new challenges arising in the field of population and development. Taking this very opportunity, I would like to share with everyone the population and development strategy of the China, particularly the ideas and practices of China in response to the changing age structure of population.

**Since the 1960s, China has quickly achieved the transition towards the modern population reproduction pattern.** With the rehabilitation of economy, stabilization of society and improvements in people's living and healthcare level, the gross population of China increased 540 million in early years of the new nation to 830 million in 1970, posing heavy pressure on economic and social development. Therefore, China launched the family planning program in 1970s. During the past 40 years, China has been emphasizing the compound decisions for population and development and continuously improving population policy, In the context of underdeveloped economy and imperfect social security system, reduce the fertility rate to below the replacement level. China has achieved the transition towards the modern population reproduction pattern of "low fertility, low mortality and low natural growth, with maternal mortality rate dropping from 120 per 100,000 live births in early 1970s to 20.1 per 100,000 live births in 2015, and infant mortality rate dropping from 47.0‰ to 8.1‰. In addition, China's average life expectancy has increased from 61 to 76.34. The proactive explorations and successful practices of China in the population field not only contribute to the long-term swift economic growth and improved living and development conditions of the Chinese people, but also make positive contributions to the world population and development.

**Population transition will certainly lead to the significant changes in the age structure of population.** China's fertility rate has been reducing quickly, with Total Fertility Rate (TFR) dropping from 5.8 in 1950 to 1.5-1.6 in 2010, leading to the

dramatic changes in population age structure in the first half of this century. According to our projection, the gross population of China will peak at 1.45 billion around 2030, followed by a gentle stage of negative growth and then dropping to 1.4 billion in 2050. The proportion of underage population has been reducing continuously. Population aged 0-14 reached 227 million in 2015, accounting for 16.5% of gross population, which will drop to 16.0% in 2030 and then 14.39% in 2050. Declining persistently in the past years, the working-age population was 1.003 billion in 2015, and will drop by 3-6 million per year after 2021 to reach 952 million in 2030 and 808 million in 2050. Given the rising level of population ageing, it's expected that population aged 65 or above will hit 262 million in 2030, accounting for 18.1% of gross population, and 395 million in 2050, accounting for 28.11% of gross population. In the second half of the 21st Century, the proportion of aged population will maintain at around 30%.

**The changes in population age structure will have profound influence on the socioeconomic development of China.** With population being the main subject of socioeconomic development, the reduction in working-age population will exert downward pressure on potential economic growth, whilst population ageing will increase the burden of elderly support and put more pressure on social security and public services. Not only must China face such challenges as excessive population, tense relation between resources and environment and the heavy pressure from employment which prevail in developing countries, it must also stand up to the tests of low fertility and population ageing as found in developed countries.

**China has identified balanced development of the population as a major national strategy.** In the face of the transitional changes in population situations, China formulated National Population Development Plan(2016-2030), implementing the universal two-child policy to promote the balanced development of the population, which only requires the cross-equalization among respective elements of the population, but also entails the mutual adaptation between population and economy, society, resources, environment and other external elements. Balanced development of the population rests with the balanced population age structure and the moderate fertility level. By implementing the strategy of balanced development of the population, respecting the dominant roles of individuals and families in population issues development, China is more emphasizing the joint action of curbing population growth, optimizing population structure and enhancing population quality. Efforts have been made to increase and maintain the fertility rate at an appropriate range, avoid the quick drop of population after reaching the peak, exploit the population potential of all age groups, achieve the own balanced development of the population, and enable sustainable development between population and economy, society, resources and environment.

**China has been actively improving population policy, with notable**

**outcomes received.** During the past years, China has been gradually improving its fertility policy and the supporting measures relating to maternal & child health, maternity leave, paternity leave and women's employment, and reoriented family planning program with notable outcomes received. Despite the continuous drop in number of reproductive-age women, the number of newborn population has markedly increased from 16.4 million in 2013 to 17.86 million in 2016; the proportion of second and subsequent births has increased significantly, and the Total Fertility Rate has recovered to 1.7. China is actively building a reproduction-friendly social environment by improving policies relating to healthcare, child nursing, education, taxation, social security, housing and family support, and combining economic development, social construction, respect for and protection of human rights and the promotion of gender equality with population issues. By further improving population policy and the associated economic and social policies, China is bound to achieve and maintain a moderate fertility level.

Given the different levels of socioeconomic development among countries and regions around the globe, they are currently at different stages of demographic transition and show distinct differences in terms of the direction and pace of the changes in population age structure, thus giving rise to different population-related challenges. Population change has its own objective laws. Either high fertility or deepening population ageing determines or indicates the future trend of population change, and exerts its influence on the realization of 2030 sustainable development goals. We are now in an age of mutual dependence and close interconnection, and with deeper foresight, profounder vision and firmer strides, we must jointly respond to the new challenges facing the population issue and give full play to the active role of population factor in sustainable development. As always, China will keep pushing forward the international exchanges and cooperation on population and development (including South-South Cooperation), discuss problems and challenges and share our experience, so as to make new and greater contributions to the construction of our beautiful homes and the building of a future as we have expected.

Thank you, Ms. Chairman.