

Commission on Population and Development
51st Session
United States Closing Statement
April 13, 2018

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to express our gratitude to you and our facilitator from South Africa, to our colleagues on the Commission, and in the Secretariat, for all of your hard work during the course of the Commission, as we gathered to discuss this year's theme of sustainable cities, human mobility, and international migration. It is regrettable we were unable to reach consensus after devoting much time and effort discussing these important topics.

The United States is unable to accept the Chair's text due to the multiple, "unqualified" references to sexual and reproductive health. In addition, the proposed language on policy space does not reaffirm the sovereign right of nations and is also not acceptable. To be clear, as we have said throughout our negotiations, my delegation has consistently called for the removal or change of all unqualified language on sexual and reproductive health and inclusion of a true sovereignty clause.

Recognizing that nearly half of the world's migrants are women, the United States is committed to addressing the unique needs of displaced and migrant women and girls. We fully support the principle of informed voluntary choice regarding maternal and child health and family planning. However, the terms "sexual and reproductive health" and "reproductive rights" are open to many interpretations. As we have stated clearly, and on many occasions, consistent with the ICPD Program of Action, the United States does not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor do we support abortion in our reproductive health assistance. We do not understand this term to include the promotion of abortion and educational strategies that may increase sexual risk for youth. We strongly support health care services, which empower adolescents to avoid sexual risks, prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, thereby improving their opportunity to thrive into adulthood.

The United States also maintains that safe, orderly and regular migration well-managed by States supports economic growth and prosperity and strengthens national and global security. The U.S. is a leader in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to those fleeing persecution, torture, and conflict, and we encourage other governments to increase their assistance to these individuals, including those who are victims of human trafficking.

My government also expressed concerns about the references to other migration processes taking place in which we are not participating and we believe it is vital to recognize the sovereign right of states to regulate the entry and stay of foreign nationals, consistent with their national laws and international obligations.

In closing, my delegation regrets the Commission was not able to reach a successful conclusion this year; however, we sincerely appreciate all that you have done to try and find consensus amongst the delegations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.