

CPD52 Joint Statement delivered H.E. Ms. Reina Buijs, Vice-Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands on behalf of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Congo (Brazzaville), Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Israel, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, North Macedonia, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia

Mr. Chair,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Governments and people of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Congo (Brazzaville), Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Israel, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, North Macedonia, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia.

Mr. Chair, we welcome and warmly applaud the Commission success in adopting this political declaration. And at the outset, we wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership and for taking us through an inclusive negotiation process to reach consensus as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of International Conference on Population and Development. We also thank the other members of the Bureau and all the delegations that contributed constructively to this positive outcome. We also wish to express our thanks to the secretariat for their support and guidance and recognize the essential support of civil society and young people.

Mr. Chair, twenty-five years ago, 179 government representatives committed to ensure that every individual on the planet be valued, that all women and girls be empowered and supported by their communities in their own decisions and choices. We committed to the full and effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of action, then, and we strongly reaffirm our commitment to accelerated action to promote, defend and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, today.

In many ways, the ICPD Programme of action was groundbreaking in 1994 as it shifted the emphasis from numeric population targets to dignity and human rights, including the right to decide if, when and with whom to have children- as fundamental to sustainable development. Today, it remains a valid and truly transformative agenda that underpins a far-reaching set of goals linking global health, gender equality, human rights, population dynamics and sustainable development for all.

Thanks to ICPD Programme of action and the outcomes of its review conferences over the past two and half decades, progress has been made globally in saving lives, empowering women and strengthening gender equality. Many barriers have been broken down for millions of people allowing them to access better health, higher levels of education, better survival chance at birth, decreased child and maternal mortality, access to quality reproductive health services and more opportunities for the largest-ever generation of adolescents and youth. These outcomes are central to our shared objectives of reducing poverty, inequality and improving economic development and global stability in the context of the 2030 agenda.

Mr. Chair, as we celebrate progress and successes of 25 years of implementation of the ICPD, other needs and rights defined in its Programme of action remain elusive for far too many people worldwide. And it is those who are oppressed, discriminated against, most deprived, displaced, living in fragile or humanitarian settings or otherwise marginalized in society whose needs are too often unfulfilled. Gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights take an enormous toll on individuals, families, communities and economies around the world. As reaffirmed in the 2030 agenda, the achievement of the full human potential is possible only if we meaningfully address discrimination, violence and continued human rights violations against women and girls. These principles that have been agreed and reaffirmed since 1994, fundamentally underpin sustainable development and social justice.

Addressing these and other sexual and reproductive health and rights gaps and needs requires a holistic approach that encompasses the right of all individuals to make decisions about their bodies and lives, free of stigma, discrimination and coercion and to have access to essential sexual reproductive health services and information, including comprehensive sexuality education. This is not only fundamental to people's health and survival, but it is necessary to advancing economic development and ultimately the well-being of humanity.

Mr. Chair, we have worked to make these principles a reality in our national policies and through our support to sustainable development worldwide. We welcome the critical outcomes of the regional reviews this year to advance and accelerate the implementation of the ICPD Programme of action and we look forward to the Nairobi Summit. We also would like to emphasize the important mandate, work and support of UNFPA and other UN agencies, as well as the role of civil society actors and partnerships in assisting countries to achieve the goals and objectives of the Programme of action. And today, we firmly recommit to accelerated efforts to the full implementation of the ICPD and 2030 agenda domestically and around the world not to leave anyone behind.

In closing Mr. Chair, we are hopeful that building on the renewed constructive spirit that led to the consensus reached today, we will be able to foster the actions of the Commission and the full realization of the ICPD promise that we made in Cairo.

We thank you.