



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations
New York

Statement

on

behalf of the

Federal Republic of Germany

at the

52nd Session

of the

Commission on Population and Development

1–5 April 2019

Agenda item 3: General Debate

(a) Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

(b) Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

It is a great honour for me to speak with you here today. Twenty-five years after the Programme of Action was adopted at the International Conference on Population in Cairo, its themes are more relevant than ever. The international community recognized then that meeting the needs and upholding the rights of every individual are crucial for the sustainable development of a country.

On behalf of the German delegation, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the UN Population Division and UNFPA for their comprehensive reports. They show that we have reason to celebrate: in the last twenty-five years, we have achieved great progress in improving equality, education and health outcomes around the world.

But the reports also show that a great deal still needs to be done to complete the unfinished business of the Cairo Agenda, implement the 2030 Agenda and reach the sustainable development goals.

Many countries are grappling with the question of how to tap the great potential offered by their young populations. This is an issue we are

working on closely with our international partners. Key factors for individual empowerment are education, employment, health and the protection of sexual and reproductive rights. This also means that girls and women must be able to live free of violence and abuse, can protect themselves against unintended pregnancy and receive healthcare before and during childbirth. In addition to comprehensive sexuality education, this requires access to sexual and reproductive health services and modern contraceptives.

Mr. Chair,

Germany has long benefited from a favourable age structure, and we are happy to share our demographic experience. In return, we would be grateful for any input that can help us develop a new and more positive attitude towards aging, because the dominant population trends in Germany will be the aging of society and the baby boomer generation entering retirement starting in 2020. If left unaddressed, these trends would leave major gaps in the workforce. However, we have taken effective steps to shore up our workforce, for example passing the Act on the Improved Compatibility of Family, Caring and Career. Implemented in January 2015, this law introduced a compensation for employees for lost income when they need to take time off to organize care for close relatives. Employees are entitled to up to 10 days of leave for this purpose when care needs in the family arise. Furthermore, employees who wish to provide care themselves are entitled to take up to six months of long-term care leave, either full-time or part-time. Employees are also entitled to up to three months' leave to provide palliative care to close relatives at the end of life.

But progress on Sustainable Development Goal 8 – decent work and economic growth – has been much too slow.

In order to make headway in this respect, it is necessary to free vocational and study choices from restrictive stereotypes and to help girls and boys to make vocational choices based on their strengths – and not on outdated gender roles. Girls' Day, Boys' Day, and the federal initiative "No clichés" successfully support both girls and boys as well as everyone else involved in the process of choosing a vocation in combating stereotypes, thereby helping to reduce gender segregation in the labour market.

But besides this: Particularly in the work world, people over the age of 60 are often viewed as too old and no longer productive. But their experience, wisdom and knowledge are invaluable to employers and society as a whole. So we need to make use of their potential. This agrees with the findings of the UNECE regional conference in Geneva last autumn. Many of the speakers there highlighted the need to combat age-based stereotypes and discrimination, recognize and support the productivity of the older generation, and promote healthy, active and independent living in old age. I look forward to hearing what the panel on the regional reports has to say about this issue.

Planning for a longer lifespan starts well before age 65: It is necessary to consider the entire lifespan, not least because advantages and disadvantages accumulate across the course of one's life. We are working closely with experts on this topic. We also hope to profit from the experience of other countries, and we have been discussing this issue with our neighbouring countries since last year. At the UN level, Germany partici-

pates in the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A). We need to strengthen the potential of older people, protect their human rights, fight age discrimination, and support their social security, health and autonomy. In this respect, we consider it important that the topic of education and learning for older people is on the agenda of the Open-Ended Working Group in this year's session.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Remaining active in old age requires good infrastructure. Even in a highly developed country like Germany, such infrastructure is not always available. This is why promoting equivalent living conditions in urban and rural areas is a priority of our demographic strategy, "Every Age Counts". In July 2018, we created a government commission devoted to key questions for the future: Is there sufficient provision of goods and services? What can individuals do to improve quality of life in their communities? Can I keep living in familiar surroundings as I age? All these questions touch on the Cairo Programme of Action and the sustainable development goals. The commission will present its results in summer, and I would be happy to share them with you. Before then, at a side event this Wednesday at the German House, I would like to talk with you about how Germany worked on its demographic strategy with a variety of actors from different ministries and at different levels. We will also look at the role of population change in development cooperation and draw on the experience of our partner countries. I invite you all to attend.

Mr Chair,

The issues addressed in the Programme of Action are highly relevant and increasingly complex. We remain committed to realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights and integrating population dynamics into policy planning. In addition to working with our partner countries to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents, we support implementing partners and global initiatives. This is why we increased our core contribution to UNFPA to 33 million euros. We are also pleased to be part of the She Decides movement, which supports women around the world in their efforts to strengthen their right to self-determination. We will continue to support the efforts of the Commission on Population and Development and will work towards reaching substantive decisions. The Political Declaration adopted this year and the Nairobi Summit in November should provide the necessary boost.

Thank you!