

Statement by delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran

**52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Developments
Under Item 2(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 Sustainable Development.**

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Mr. Chair,

My delegation aligns itself to the statement made by the State of Palestine, on behalf of the G77 and China. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary General for providing us with the report to this session of the Commission.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the forerunner countries in establishing health care services system among the Asia and Pacific countries and remains steadfast in fulfilling its national development objectives. Our national efforts are based on resilient development to address such critical areas as health, education, population growth, ageing, urbanization, family protection, empowerment of women and girls, and protection of persons with disabilities.

Considerable progress has been made on health-related indicators such as reduction of maternal mortality, vaccination coverage, and births attended by skilled health personnel. The Government has recently redoubled its efforts with remarkable success to provide Iranians with universal health coverage. It is worth noting that everyone's access to sexual & reproductive health care and HIV/AIDS health care services is ensured while those living with HIV/AIDS receive required services free of charge.

The working-age population of Iran has increased to 71 percent, offering the country a limited time “demographic window of opportunity”

and positioning it to harness its first and second demographic dividend. While life expectancy at birth reached 74 years old in 2016, the share of declining birth rate, during last decades causes the number and proportion of older persons to increase from current 6.5 million to nearly 30 million in 2050. Thus, the Government explores ways to develop effective strategies to properly place these issues in national policies and plans. I would like to recall the Regional Conference on Aging, that was held in Tehran last year, in order to consider and share views on strategies, challenges, achievements and best practices among more than 40 countries in Asia- Pacific region in the areas of health, insurance, reinstatement, welfare and other issues related to the second demographic dividend.

Iran has also recorded significant achievements in empowering women and girls in various areas, particularly in health, education and sanitation. The Government has devised numerous policy measures and frameworks. The rate for female university students has increased by 14 times over last three decades. According to the recent Presidential decree, all the Ministries and governmental entities are obliged to allocate at least 30% of their managerial positions to women by 2020. There are also about 700 assistant judges, advisors and deputy prosecutors in courts, who are authorized to issue judicial verdicts.

However, a number of challenges still persist on the way to achieving population development goals, especially in areas relating to rapid ageing, environmental and disaster risks and unemployment, which need to be appropriately addressed through effective remedial measures.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that the ICPD is a milestone in enhancing the aptitude of the international community for integrating a people-centered approach into our shared effort for fostering sustainable development, in which no person and no countries should be left behind.

The unilateral and unlawful economic sanctions have negative effects on the wellbeing and everyday life of Iranians. Such inhumane measures have caused difficulties in ensuring access to medicines and medical devices. They intentionally and indiscriminately target civilians and are designed to undermine years of national achievements in population development efforts. Illegitimate sanctions, contrary to the UN principles, disrupt normal channels of international trade and cooperation, and hamper food security and access to healthcare services and pharmaceutical supplies. Such coercive measures expose innocent civilians to collective punishment.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Iran is determined to cooperate with all interested countries for visiting all internationally agreed development goals including those related to population.

I thank you.