

**Commission on Population and Development
Fifty Second Session**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, we would like to congratulate the chair and the members of the bureau on the successful negotiations that led to today's adoption of the Declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the ICPD.

Twenty-five years ago, Member States adopted the historic Cairo Declaration, which brought into sharp focus the need to think of healthy societies in a holistic way. The wide range of issues it covers, including gender equality; the changing structures of families; sexual and reproductive healthcare and services; accessible and affordable healthcare; migration and urbanization; education and more, form the basis to our work today.

It is wide-ranging because one weak link in the chain – one neglected area – will hold back progress in other areas. We recognized this over 20 years later, in the interconnectedness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chair,

Women and girls, who are just over half the global population, are still **clamoring** for equal rights. There must be no barrier, official or otherwise, to women and girls achieving their full potential because of their gender, and we must ensure that women and girls are safe and protected from all forms of violence, including sexual harassment and violence. It has been clearly shown that the best interests of women are the best interests of us all. Perhaps we still need this reminder to speed progress. However, we should not **need any** economic or social rationale for ensuring gender equality: it is a fundamental human right that needs no further justification.

Israel made huge advances in gender equality. From the halls of our government, to the boardrooms of our businesses, to local and rural communities, women have leading roles in Israeli society. In a region where women are often excluded from public life, Israel stands out as a beacon of democracy and equality.

As a tiny nation with few natural resources, difficult farming conditions and persistent adversity, in just a few decades, we transformed from a developing nation to a prominent member of the OECD.

The secret to Israel's success is the investments we make in our greatest natural resource – our human capital. By engaging and empowering every person in society, Israelis have propelled our small country to the forefront of the global economy.

Mr. Chair,

National policies may seem to be just that: national. But today, in an era of unprecedented globalization, a lack of vision and planning in one country will – sooner or later – be felt by its neighbors and beyond.

Only by working together – all hands on deck – will we be able to achieve the ambitious goals set out in the ICPD.

Thank you.