

Draft Statement
Commission on Population and Development
Fifty-Second Session
1st to 5th April 2019

Theme: 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,

1. At the outset, allow me to offer our congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Fifty-second Session of the Commission on Population and Development. Let me assure you of our support as you lead our work during this important session, which falls on the special occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.
2. Mr. Chair, we express our continued support for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD held in Cairo in 1994. We applaud the Programme of Action's holistic approach toward very complex and politically sensitive issues. Furthermore, we note that the successful implementation of the Programme of Action will contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.
3. While we are committed to achieving the ICPD objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals, as a member of the SIDS, we are also committed to ensuring that the SAMOA Pathway is fully implemented.
4. As such, we welcome the theme of this session, "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."
5. Mr. Chair, let me congratulate you on the successful adoption of the commemorative political declaration for this Session. We fully support your approach of adopting a short declaration rather than a resolution. The Commission's inability to reach consensus on a resolution during three of the past four sessions has not only affected the credibility of this Commission, but it has also underscored the reality that Member States hold deeply divergent positions on some highly sensitive issues tangential to the work of this Commission. It is our position that many of these sensitive issues are most appropriately dealt with at the national level and

that, once they are left for national governments to determine, there will be far fewer barriers to reaching consensus on international documents. We view your very skilled and successful handling of this session's work as a good way forward.

6. In analyzing the ways in which the ICPD objectives have contributed and will continue to contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, we are particularly focused on strengthening the family, providing all children with quality education, protecting and equipping youth, ensuring the highest attainable standard of health for all, empowering women, supporting the advancement of technology, increasing international partnerships, and protecting our climate in order to secure our future.
7. At the national level we have made progress in improving infant and maternal mortality rates, the 2008 Vital Statistic report shows that there were no cases of maternal deaths during the 2011 to 2013 period. Much has also been achieved in the provision of vaccines to children and in the number of births attended by a skilled health professional. There has been continued improvement in service delivery in the health sector due to investment in internal training and health care scholarships and political will. We have also adopted and updated our legislations to ensure the protection of women and children, the challenge now is strengthening our institutions to effectively enforce these legislations.

The family, children, education

8. We believe that policies designed to achieve sustainable development in the context of changing populations and levels of development must focus on strengthening and protecting the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. The family has the primary responsibility for the nurture and protection of our children. Investing in children and youth is of first importance to our nation. We are fully committed to ensuring that our children and youth receive high quality education and that they have access to valuable employment upon reaching the legal working age.

Youth

9. It is our belief that the most important investment we can make in our youth is in their character. We know that the moral formation of a child happens best in the context of the family and that both mother and father have a significant role to play in this regard. Our youth will soon be leading our nations and facing significant development challenges; they will need virtue and character to face these challenges well.

Values

10. In our region, especially, we experience the world as full of uncertainty—economic, political, and ecological. The one constant for us, the one thing that allows us to thrive amidst the challenges we face, is our identity: our heritage, our faith, our values, our culture. Therefore, it is crucial that, as we seek to implement the Programme of Action and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, international development assistance not be contingent on ideological colonization or imposition of ideas that are contrary to our core societal values.

Abortion

11. We would like to make clear that we do not view the promotion of abortion as a means of achieving sustainable development. We want to remind the Commission that the promotion of abortion as a method of family planning is contrary to the ICPD and that it is also a great departure from long established religious and societal norms in our country and many of the countries in our region, and this dynamic must be respected.

Building capacities

12. Finally, Mr. Chair, we would like to call on the UN system to provide support in building capacities and ensuring adequate and sustainable financing for achieving sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda.
13. We acknowledge the primary responsibility of our States for their own sustainable development. However, we recognize that the persistent development challenges of SIDS require enhanced global partnership and easy access to MOI. So too must the developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of achieving sustainable development. We encourage our partners to continue to improve their efforts to promote sustained economic growth and to narrow imbalances in a manner that can benefit all countries.
14. We look forward to further engagement on these issues during the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, to be held in July 2019, and to the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly to be held in September 2019.
15. Thank you.