

**CPD 2019 SESSION  
STATEMENT BY TURKEY**

**Agenda item 3 (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,

Since its adoption in 1994, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has had an enormous impact, bringing together different views on population and development, and placing human rights at the heart of development. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the ICPD, we underline that ensuring human rights for all, including for women and girls, and ending discrimination in all its forms, is an absolute necessity for the achievement of sustainable development. This approach should be the overarching principle of our efforts as our world is going through waves of humanitarian crises, putting mainly women, youth and children at risk. As the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, we have placed this approach at the center of our efforts for 3.7 million Syrians. Although considerable progress has been made in many key areas of the Programme of Action, critical gaps remain among countries and regions. The benefits of social and economic progress have not been shared equitably. In this context, we welcome the pledge made in the Declaration that we adopted on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ICPD, in order to undertake further action to ensure its full and accelerated implementation,

Mr. Chair,

The 2030 Agenda integrated the global consensus on interlinkages between population and development, building on preceding international frameworks. As underlined by the Secretary General, fulfilling the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility. This includes ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care, protecting reproductive rights, ending poverty, advancing education, ensuring decent work for all, reducing social and economic inequalities and ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The 10th Development Plan of Turkey, which covered 2014-2018, placed sustainable development at its heart with a human-centered development approach. We will continue to do so in our next five year plan. We have mainstreamed SDGs and ICPD Programme of Action into our National Development Plan.

We fully agree that population issues are central to sustainable development efforts. In this vein, we share the Secretary General's view that "population trends should feature prominently in voluntary national reviews (VNR) presented at the high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development". We will take this recommendation into account in our preparations for the second VNR report that we will present at this year's HLPF. The second VNR will focus on our inclusion policies targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It will showcase how Turkey mainstreamed these inclusive policies into its national programmes and projects.

Mr. Chair,

Population dynamics are guiding our national development priorities and policies. Today Turkey is undergoing a demographic transformation from a young population structure to a

relatively older one. In Turkey the median age reached 32 in 2018 and is rising steadily. The share of the population over 65 reached 8.8 percent in 2018. This age group's share is projected to rise to 16.3 percent in 2040 and to 22.6 percent in 2060. This population trend has brought the "ageing" phenomenon to the forefront of the development agenda of Turkey. In this regard, we adopted the Healthy Ageing Action Plan and the Implementation Program for 2015-2020. We are striving to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, improve the care system, increase participation of the elderly in the decision making processes and foster the notion of active ageing. In response to the increase in ageing within our population, we have been taking measures to maintain the current level of fertility which stands around replacement level. In-cash contributions, enhancing family and work life reconciliation through improved childcare and flexible working hours are among the incentives taken to achieve this goal in recent years.

Turkey has been making significant improvements in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, family planning, maternal and child health. Antenatal care and safe deliveries have increased significantly. Today, 97 percent of the deliveries have been realizing in health facilities. The share of mothers who received antenatal care has reached 97 percent while the rate of access to postnatal care is 94 percent. In line with these improvements, infant mortality rate decreased to 9.2 per thousand in 2017 from 12 per thousand in 2010. Maternal mortality rate diminished to 14.2 per hundred thousand births. Although significant reductions in maternal and infant mortality have been achieved; there are some gaps between regions and subpopulations. Our goal now is to bridge these gaps entirely.

Turkey has been successful in controlling communicable diseases through its Primary Health Care System. Recently, non-communicable diseases have become more prevalent as a consequence of rapid economic development. Currently some of our major health promotion programmes are focusing on areas such tobacco control, obesity, cancer screening and diabetes.

Mr. Chair,

In our efforts to combat violence against women, we are implementing a "zero tolerance" policy. Turkey was the first country to ratify the European Convention on violence against women which created a comprehensive legal framework to protect women against all forms of violence. Turkey adopted the Women Empowerment Action Plan (2018-2023) and National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women (2016-2020) to strengthen its policy framework. In the last decade, gender discriminatory items from the legislative framework have been almost completely eliminated. We adopted policies to eliminate harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriages through integrated multi-sectoral strategies. As a result, marriage rate among adolescents aged 16-17 has decreased to 4.2 percent in 2017 from 6.2 percent in 2013. Thanks to employment and education incentives, labor force participation rate of women aged between 15-64 rose by 5% in the last five years.

Investing in girls' education yields comparatively higher returns for societies, leading to positive externalities such as improvement in intergenerational health outcomes by reducing the likelihood of child marriage, delaying childbearing, increasing access to health care, decreasing infant and child mortality. Female literacy is closely associated with increased use

of contraception, lower fertility, healthier families and stronger GDP growth. With this understanding, the duration of compulsory education in Turkey has been increased from 8 to 12 years. Consequently, the expected years of schooling rose to 17 years. Incentives such as conditional cash transfers, free school books and lunch, free transportation for children living in remote areas guarantee that every child irrespective of her socio-economic status have access to education.

In the last decade Turkey's population registration system has been enhanced substantially. Censuses are conducted based on this population registration system. Disaggregated population data and vital statistics are being produced periodically. Registration systems of health related institutions are improving and a maternal deaths tracking system has been established. Turkey is also conducting demographic and health surveys which is compatible with global DHS surveys by 5 year intervals since 1963 in order to have more detailed data on demographic issues.

Mr. Chair,

Migration is a key feature of the globalized twenty-first century, and human mobility is a cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable development. As recognized by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), when managed well, international migration contributes to sustainable development in countries of origin and destination and helps migrants and their families improve their standard of living. We welcome the adoption of the GCM, which synthesizes the vital link between migration and development, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

We believe that efficient implementation of the Compact will also help us in realizing the SDGs and the Programme of Action. At least 8 of the 169 targets of the SDGs are directly relevant to international migration. During the GCM negotiations, we strongly advocated the need to address the capacities of the source, transit and destination countries. By addressing the full migration cycle, from conditions in countries of origin to issues of return or integration in countries of destination, the Global Compact proposes actions that, when implemented, would achieve the goals of the Programme of Action.

We are working closely with UNFPA to address the social and health service needs of Syrian women and girls in Turkey. Together with UNFPA we established over 40 women and girls' safe spaces across the country. Last year this cooperation has been expanded to a number of social service centers with a view to reach over 1 million people in order to provide psychological support, basic sexual and reproductive health services, legal advice and Turkish lessons.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to conclude by expressing our readiness to contribute constructively to this session and reiterating our support to the continuing centrality of the ICPD Program of Action.

Thank you.