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VANUATU COUNTRY STATEMENT
Agenda Item 3
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Nations

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Vanuatu.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you chair and your bureau on your election. Please be assured of my delegation's full support as you guide us through this session. I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairperson, your bureau and the Commission Secretariat for your tireless efforts to prepare us for the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Please also allow me to express words of deep appreciation for the Secretary General's insightful reports to the Commission. Vanuatu welcomes the theme of this year's debate "*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*", consistent with the five-year cycle of the review of the status of implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairperson,

Twenty five years ago, the momentous International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) created a pivotal shift in how population policies and programmes transitioned to placing people at the heart of development, founded in the respect for human rights and elevating the importance of environmental sustainability. The Programme of Action of ICPD remains as much relevant today in the context of the 2030 Agenda than it did 25 years ago.

Mr. Chairperson,

Understanding population dynamics remains essential in framing policies and programmes to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Taking a human rights approach - analyzing the inequalities which lie at the heart of development, remedying discriminatory practices and unjust distribution of power – is a vital part of this process.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's reports to the Commission, while remarkable progress has been made, significant gaps in the implementation of various areas of the Programme of Action remain. Progress in these areas need to be accelerated.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the Asia-Pacific region, including Vanuatu, high unemployment, especially among the youth remain an area of concern. The root causes of declining employment trends, especially among women, need to be better understood and addressed through targeted policies and programmes.

Education and training remain key tools in eradicating poverty. Enrolments in all three stages of education, particularly enrolment of girls, continue to be a priority for the Vanuatu Government. Moreover, the Vanuatu Government is cognizant of the fact that education and sexual and reproductive health policies need to be approached in a holistic manner to empower women and particularly girls in both urban and rural areas in order to curb rising teenage pregnancies.

With economic growth comes the need for new skills sets. The Vanuatu Government is reforming its training systems to respond to the skills, including non-formal skills, required by a dynamic labour market, targeting our youth.

Mr. Chairperson,

Health and well-being for all ages are at the centre of Programme of Action of the ICPD as they are for the 2030 Agenda. It is positioned as a major contributor to other sustainable development goals as without health, progress towards meeting the sustainable development goals cannot be achieved. While reductions in the prevalence of communicable diseases and life expectancy have significantly increased in the Asia – Pacific region including Vanuatu, the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases continue to pose major concerns. Access to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, is an issue rural dwellers in Vanuatu and in many parts of the Asia-Pacific region continue to lack.

Moreover, we must ensure that vulnerable members of our societies, particularly women and girls in poor countries, are not disproportionately burdened by the impacts of Climate Change.

Mr. Chairperson,

With economic growth comes urbanization. It is crucial for urban areas to be well managed and planned and be inclusive of the rights and needs of internal migrants. It is imperative that the planning and provision for urban services are informed by robust, reliable and innovative data, including population data.

On the topic of data, the need to strengthen national statistical systems to improve timely collection, analysis, availability and use of quality disaggregated data in developing states cannot be more pressing. The Programme of Action of ICPD clearly outlines that quality data plays a pivotal role in informing policy and programme development as well as monitoring progress in its implementation. This has wide acceptance to be the case for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chairperson,

Vanuatu remains committed to implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and by extension, the 2030 Agenda. Key to their successes are among others, expanding access to education, health and urban services, promoting skill development and employment, improving the quality of disaggregated data, creating resilience to the impacts of Climate Change and empowering the individuals, in particular women and girls, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.