



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 August 2019

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 12 July 2019, I wish to extend my appreciation to all delegations for their participation in the High-level plenary meeting on the “Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development” which was convened on 16-17 July 2019 in the General Assembly Hall, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/303.

It is my honour to enclose herewith the Summary of the High-level plenary meeting which highlights key messages from statements delivered in the Opening Segment and the Plenary.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'MFEspinosa'.

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Missions and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



**73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

**High-level Plenary Meeting  
to commemorate the  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
International Conference on Population and  
Development (ICPD+25)**

**Informal Summary of the  
President of the General Assembly**



**High-level plenary meeting to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the  
International Conference on Population and Development,  
United Nations Headquarters, New York, 16-17 July 2019**

### **Introduction**

In accordance with resolution [73/303](#), the General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 17 July 2019.

Member States underscored the enduring relevance of the ICPD Programme of Action, adopted by 179 States in Cairo, Egypt in 1994; the contribution of the Programme of Action to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the landmark political declaration on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Programme of Action, adopted by the Commission on Population and Development in April 2019, and the need for the full and accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action. Speakers paid tribute to the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in implementing the Programme of Action and congratulated its Executive Director on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They looked forward to the Nairobi Summit on “*ICPD25: Accelerating the promise*”, organized by the governments of Denmark and Kenya with support of UNFPA, which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 12 to 14 November 2019.

### **Opening Statements**

**H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly noted that Member States had continually reaffirmed the relevance of the ICPD Programme of Action since its adoption, while recognizing the critical role of civil society in its implementation. Since 1994, important progress had been made in implementing the Programme of Action, including by reducing poverty, improving access to health, reducing child and maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS, and in achieving gender equity in accessing primary education. She drew attention to the challenges of widening inequalities and urged countries to uphold labour standards and to develop and implement social protection frameworks.

**H. E. Mr. António Guterres**, Secretary-General of the United Nations noted that many of the issues addressed in the Programme of Action had become even more urgent 25 years later with urbanization, ageing and migration becoming major demographic challenges. Recalling the global pushback on women’s rights, he stressed that women and girls continued to face inequalities and violence, including child marriage. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and



Regular Migration embodied many of the policy priorities highlighted in the Programme of Action.

**H.E. Dr. Hala Zaid**, Minister of Health and Population of Egypt, noted that governments must reassess their development strategies with the aim of developing solutions to burgeoning issues, including the need to: protect adolescents and children from harmful practices such as child marriage; invest in quality education; halt the tide of extreme poverty; and confront gender inequality. She called on international organizations to increase financial support and to work with governments and civil society to achieve the goals and objectives of “Cairo”.

**Ms. Banice Mbuki Mburu**, a representative of The African Civil Society Organizations Coalition on Population and Development (ACCPD), illustrated the need to provide access to comprehensive sexuality education for young people by referring to a former classmate who was still a child when she was forced into an early, unwanted marriage without access to family planning. She argued that access to information on family planning and quality education were critical to ensure that young people could fulfil their ambitions. Given the critical role of civil society in implementing the Programme of Action, she urged governments to strengthen their ties with stakeholders.

**Dr. Natalia Kanem**, Executive Director of UNFPA noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflected many of the values of the ICPD Programme of Action, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, a focus on individual agency, and the empowerment of women and girls. Despite progress in implementing the Programme of Action, approximately 830 women died every day from complications during pregnancy and childbirth, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation persisted, and 2.6 million babies were stillborn every year.

**Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano**, Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), observed that the Programme of Action remained a forward-looking agenda and cited areas of progress since its adoption. The analytical work of the Population Division of DESA highlighted major population trends requiring urgent policy attention, including population growth, population ageing, international migration and urbanisation.

### **Statements by Member States and observers**

In total, 37 Member States took the floor to deliver statements in their national capacity as well as on behalf of groups of countries, including the Group of 77 and China, the Africa Group, the European Union and a cross-regional group.

Speakers noted that the ICPD Programme of Action marked a shift in the discourse on population and development, highlighting the centrality of human rights and women’s empowerment for achieving sustained economic growth and for improving the well-being of all. Since its adoption, significant progress had been made in lowering child and maternal mortality, increasing life expectancy, abating the spread of HIV/AIDS, reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty, and achieving gender parity in completing primary education.

Member States called for integrating the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda into national development programmes and strategies as well as for implementing the outcomes of the regional reviews of the Programme of Action. They further called for including sexual and

reproductive health services into universal health coverage and for broadening access and information to family planning. Several speakers stressed the centrality of data for guiding policy actions and for ensuring that the needs of the most marginalized, including indigenous people and Afro-descendants, were integrated into development planning. Calls were made to further integrate women into the labour force and to invest in young people to harness the demographic dividend. Speakers urged the harnessing of the benefits and mitigation of the challenges of the changing demographic context, including low fertility, population ageing, migration and urbanization.

Given the challenges that persist to fulfil the commitments of the Programme of Action, speakers urged for greater attention to:

- remove barriers to accessing health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and information on reproductive health;
- increase access to quality education for girls to expand their opportunities and to prevent early marriage;
- invest in integrated and universal health systems which address sexual and reproductive health issues as well as communicable and non-communicable diseases;
- address the needs of migrants and internally displaced persons, persons affected by disasters and those in humanitarian situations;
- respond to needs of older people in all spheres of life;
- develop skills, promote access to employment and foster entrepreneurship among young persons, and
- address gender-based violence and promote gender equality through parity in education and participation of women in political, economic and social spheres.

Several policy priorities were identified:

- In the area of **social protection**, governments were urged to provide safety nets for those who are unemployed and face homelessness, to support households which include children, and to protect rights of older people.
- To address **inequalities**, countries were encouraged to ensure access to reproductive health for women and young people, to combat discrimination and to eliminate harmful practices.
- To promote **gender equality**, it was recommended that countries encourage women to participate in political spheres, improve access to tertiary education for women and girls, and promote female entrepreneurship through access to credit and training. Countries were also urged to focus their efforts on the “three zeros”, that is, to end maternal death, to end unmet need for family planning, and to end gender-based violence and all harmful practices.
- **International migration** provided both opportunities to be harnessed and challenges to be addressed. Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was urgently needed.
- With regard to **health**, Member States were called upon to work towards achieving universal health coverage and to continue to expand family planning, improve maternal, child and adolescent health outcomes and stem the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Countries needed to respond to health epidemics and to improve preparedness and responses to disasters and other humanitarian situations.

- Many speakers highlighted the critical role of **partnerships** in raising financial and technical support to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In particular, participants emphasized the role of South-South and triangular cooperation, and the contribution of civil society, the private sector and other non-state actors.
- Countries recognized the importance of the 2020 round of population censuses as an opportunity to strengthen **population data**, acknowledging the role of UNFPA in supporting Member States.