



Remarks

by

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General Assembly

on behalf of

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General Assembly

**The Forty-Seventh Session of
the Commission on Population and Development**

New York

7 April 2014

Please check against delivery

Commission Chairman Ambassador Gonzalo Koncke,
Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo,
UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you today for this forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development

This year we celebrate an important anniversary: the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action (POA) at the historic International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, which marked a milestone in global work on population and development. With its adoption, the international community acknowledged population and development issues as central to achieving sustainable development within a rights-based framework. Such a decision also marked an important step for women's rights and gender equality.

Twenty years later, there is widespread agreement that more work is needed to ensure that the POA's goals and objectives are fully realized. While acknowledging the progress that has been made, the 65th session of the General Assembly noted the remaining gaps in its implementation and decided to extend it beyond 2014. The General Assembly also called for an operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action in order to respond to new challenges related to population and development.

Distinguished delegates,

As the Commission on Population and Development, a body which provides invaluable contributions to the work of the General Assembly, you have been tasked with assessing the status of implementation of the entire ICPD Programme of Action. Your deliberations will be informed by the operational review, which was conducted by the UN system under the leadership of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

I thank the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNFPA for their commitment and I know that their work will greatly impact a number of important upcoming processes in

the General Assembly and the UN system, including ongoing discussions on the post 2015 development agenda. I also look forward to benefiting from these contributions as we prepare to renew our political commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the Key Actions for its further implementation during a special session of the General Assembly on 22 September 2014.

Excellencies,

The ICPD Beyond 2014 review report and the Secretary-General's report clearly show that much has been achieved since 1994. It is only fitting and appropriate to celebrate these achievements. However, persistent gaps and barriers have continued to delay the ICPD objectives of achieving dignity and well-being for all. Therefore, allow me to highlight a few key lessons from these reports:

- 1) The review has provided ample evidence that the full realization of human rights is a driver for sustainable development. We must continue to work towards the elimination of discrimination and marginalization to ensure that all people, men and women, young and old can unleash their full potential.
- 2) While the world has seen significant poverty reduction in the past several years, progress has been regrettably uneven within and among countries and continents and development gains are over-shadowed by growing wealth and income inequality.
- 3) Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is, in spite of some gains, slow and uneven. Widespread discrimination against women and girls manifests as violation and abuses of their human rights; unequal opportunities to expand their capabilities and access resources; limited voice, leadership and participation; and in violence against women and girls, which is the most prevalent form of human rights violation.
- 4) We live in a world that has more young people than any time in history of humankind. Yet, we must also prepare for the challenges of society's growing ageing population. A fast-growing share of older people in the population calls for flexible labour markets, intergenerational solidarity, and social protection. ICPD provided a broad

global consensus on the necessity to invest in all age groups, to protect the human rights and dignity of all individuals and to cultivate their capabilities throughout their life cycle.

- 5) Sustainable development includes investing in life long health and education, especially for young people, women and adolescent girls. Good health, education and lifelong learning lead to social and economic dividends for societies.
- 6) Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights allow women and young people to stay healthy and make choices on the number, spacing and timing of their children contributing to equitable growth and economic well-being of societies.
- 7) As more people move their homes, whether in the form of internal or external migration, ensuring security of place and mobility becomes fundamental to sustainability. International migration is expected to continue to increase in scope and impact, requiring appropriate policies to ensure safe, legal and orderly migration, while increasing rates of urbanization will also continue to be an important policy consideration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chapter III of the ICPD Programme of Action recognizes the interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, it reflects the consensus reached in Rio in 1992 that we should, [quote], “meet the needs of present generations and improve their quality of life without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” [End quote]

Now, we need to ensure that the consensus reached in Cairo in 1994 and in subsequent reviews are fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda and the new sustainable development goals.

The General Assembly and governing bodies of the UN system will benefit from this timely review of the ICPD beyond 2014 in their work articulating a new development agenda and in

furthering the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Deliberations are underway in the Open Working Group to finalize recommendations on Sustainable Development Goals. With the collective wisdom and support of Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, we can fully integrate existing and emerging population challenges into the post-2015 UN development agenda.

Distinguished Guests,

Much has changed since 1994, and we can expect many more changes to come. To adapt and respond to new challenges, we must be bold and aspirational in setting new development goals and targets, and resolute in seeing the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action realized. Population dynamics must be integrated into development planning processes at national, regional and international levels through global leadership, political will, and partnership with grassroots and civil society organizations.

Let me assure you that, during my Presidency, I am standing by you as you work to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda reflects your priorities.

I wish you productive deliberations and look forward to your guidance.

Thank you.
