

**10th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development
Population Dynamics in the 21st Century
Transforming Challenges into Opportunities
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Keynote Address:

Population Dynamics in The Future Development Framework

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By

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Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this important meeting and to address population dynamic issues in the current debate of the post 2015 development agenda.

As we all know, the UN system has already begun a far-reaching multi-pronged process of reviews and consultations to ascertain the impact of the MDG framework and assess the progress of implementation of the ICPD POA, at the global, regional and national levels.

While the MDG framework had a fifteen year term and was to a large extent a self-contained set of goals and targets presented to countries then, the ICPD POA, which was adopted with near unanimity among all member states in Cairo, in 1994, carried a 20-year timeframe agenda, and indeed, a beyond timeline premise **of human rights, equality and sustainable development**. It is critical to mention these three premises of the ICPD Plan of Action at the outset as they are the same principles that are being suggested by the UN System for the post 2015 development agenda as I will have a chance to elaborate later.

What is special about the ICPD POA that made it so relevant beyond a particular timeline and therefore of critical relevance to the post 2015?

Indeed, unlike the earlier two World Population conferences, the ICPD POA redefined demographics and population issues primarily from a sustainable, human centric, equitable and gender sensitive standpoint. Unlike the earlier two conferences, it redefined

population policies from a human well-being and rights perspective, giving due attention to critical issues of gender equality, reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights and sustainability. Unlike the earlier conferences, the ICPD also called for all constituencies in society to play their public policy share and assume a stronger and more engaging role in governing population issues and in bringing about the desired policy, programme and reality change.

No wonder then that when the General Assembly approved the review of progress of the implementation of the ICPD POA, it took a conscious decision to retain and maintain the POA beyond 2014 sine die and without a time limit.

Interface between the Post MDG and the ICPD POA Reviews

The conjunction of the ICPD beyond 2014 Review with the assessment of the performance and delivery of the MDG framework offers an unprecedented opportunity for us to reposition population issues in the broader post 2015 and indeed post Rio+20 debate. This will help us move towards a mutually supportive, human rights and equality-based and sustainable development.

Let me at this juncture give a quick brief about the process of both the MDG and the ICPD Beyond 2014 Reviews.

Insofar as the MDG is concerned, the UN System Task Team, which the Secretary General set up early this year, has already provided a preliminary vision of a post 2015 development agenda in the SG's Report "*Realizing the Future we Want for All*". The UN Task Team has just set up a UN Working Group to look at the interface between the outcomes of the Rio+20 and the development framework which was discussed in the SG's Report in order to better define integrated sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the post 2015. I will come back to the development vision in this report to propose a positioning of population issues from a two-pronged perspective.

As we speak, eleven global thematic reviews are being carried out on a range of development issues, including Health, Inequality, Employment, Water, Energy and others. One of the Global thematic consultations is on Population Dynamics, which is being led by UNFPA. In addition, national MDG consultations are being scheduled to take place in the next few weeks in more than fifty six countries bringing government, civil society partners and a range of stakeholders together in order to take stock of countries' experiences with MDGs at the national level and to redefine development priorities and approaches for the post 2015 from a country perspective.

As to the ICPD Beyond 2014 Operation Review, it is well underway. The Review consists of several interrelated activities including a global survey and a number of thematic global and regional conferences, such as the Global Youth Forum in Bali on 4-6 December and the

Human Rights Meeting in June 2013.

The Survey design and questionnaire and the adoption of progress and impact indicators have been completed with the full participation of UN sister agencies whose mandates cover a range of development issues of primary relevance to the MDG and Post 2015 consultations including health, education, inequality, human rights, youth, aging, gender, labor, economic development, urbanization, migration, the environment, conflict and fragile contexts, and many others. Agencies will again be invited to participate in the analysis of the data gathered by the ICPD Operation Review.

Seen together, the ICPD Operation Review beyond 2014 and the MDG 2015 process are multifaceted and at different levels of depth, inter-dependence and synergy. It is in this context that the ICPD Operation Review (OR) will contribute to shaping up the post MDG and Post 2015 Development Agenda in terms of consultations, lessons learned, substantive and policy analysis, and advocacy through shared constituencies and interest groups, including government, civil society, youth groups, Parliamentarians and UN country team.

Let me now turn to substance and to mainstreaming population issues in the post 2015.

ICPD Issues as Part of the Post MDG / Post 2015 Development Agenda

It is common observation that over the last twelve years or so and since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the MDG framework has galvanized the world's attention and efforts regarding major development issues. In fact, well-defined, measurable, manageable and focused goals and targets have been quite attractive globally. Goals and targets, including Goal 5 b in connection with universal access to reproductive health, have influenced global and national development policies, resource allocations and development accountability and benchmarking.

However, while significant progress has been made on a number of fronts, significant challenges are still haunting the world community when it comes to achieving "**the Future we Want for All**". Indeed, the same reviews have highlighted the critical importance of overarching guiding principles such as **human rights equality and sustainability**, which were missing from the MDG framework, and which represented the **very premise of the ICPD POA** as stated earlier.

Also missing from the MDG framework were complementary and necessary policy areas, such as:

- a) Inclusive economic growth (regarding employment, productivity and others), and
- b) A significantly greater and sustained investment in the social sector (such as education, health including reproductive health, water and sanitation, shelter and

others).

You will agree with me that investment in the population and social sector and in bridging growing and expanding structural social and economic disparities within and across countries is both a process and an ultimate development dividend and a guarantee for sustainability.

Within these two complementary policy and programme areas, two intermediary overarching goals become critical and indispensable for the post 2015:

- a) Curbing the sources of inequality and bridging disparities, among and particularly within countries, and
- b) Supporting groups who happen to be structurally at a disadvantage, mostly women, different age groups in need such as the youth and the elderly, female adolescents and marginalized and vulnerable groups, including reaching the bottom 20 per cent.

It is in this particular context that the POA provisions and population and reproductive health issues become central to development and should be considered an integral part of and of paramount policy significance to the post-2015 development agenda. Such issues should be considered from a two-pronged policy perspective:

- a) Managing evolving population dynamics, including changing population structures, population internal and international movement and distribution; and addressing the development needs of special age groups such as youth and the older people, as they have tremendous bearing on macro social and economic development and sustainability processes and outcomes, and
- b) Bridging disparities and ensuring access to reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights, within a gender equality perspective as they represent a critical challenge for achieving dignified human development and wellbeing for all.

Let me elaborate on how population dynamics and reproductive health globally are indispensable ingredients of and should be mainstreamed in the Post MDG / Post 2015 development agenda.

Population Dynamics

Today's and even tomorrow's world demographics will have a profound impact on the world economy, and the economic and social dividends within and across countries. On the one hand, fertility levels have declined. It is today below replacement levels in over 83 countries across regions. Some of the countries have fertility rates that are considered as very low and governments in many of them are trying to implement a set of new policies

that face the challenges of rapid ageing and even the possibility of a actual decrease in population size. On the other hand, and due to the population momentum, Asia is projected to add a billion people over the next forty years, with a large increase in the elderly population. As to sub-Saharan Africa, it has not yet finalized its demographic transition. Indeed, population growth in SS Africa has been the most important socio-economic driver as a mid-size African country grows by 250 to 300,000 young people every year (as it has just been reported last week in the SG's Report on NEPAD). Population dynamics will be the major issue for African governments in the future. Close to two thirds of the population in Africa are below 25 years of age today.

Managing population dynamics will therefore be required to ease pressure on ecosystems and natural resources, facilitate the management of land and water resources, and improve the chances of achieving a more equitable distribution of energy, particularly in urban areas.

Ageing

Because of sustained decline of fertility in many parts of the world, aging is on the rise. Europe, including many Eastern European countries have an unprecedented pace of aging with an average of anywhere from 20 to 26% above the age of 60. As to Asia, aging is projected to be on a scale unmatched by any other region in the world. In China, for instance, the proportion of those aged 65 and above is projected to rise from 8% in 2010 to 26 % in 2050. Japan is now the only nation with over 30 per cent of its population aged 60 or above. By 2050 however, more than 60 countries are forecast to have passed this milestone. By 2050, it is expected that 80 per cent of the world's older people will live in developing countries.

In every continent and in societies at very different stages of economic development, we are living longer. Improved diets and sanitation, medical advances and greater prosperity have all helped push life expectancy higher.

A post-2015 development agenda should therefore account for a progressively and rapidly ageing world by promoting healthy ageing and economic well being in old age. It should also have provisions to address inequalities, which are increasingly faced by older persons. In addition, the growing number of older persons, and the ensuing increase in demand for long-term care including a sophisticated health care, presents huge social, economic and cultural challenges. Aging is increasing in families that have fewer children to look after parents, putting the intergenerational support system under stress.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said, the impacts of this demographic phenomenon across the world "are profound and extend well beyond the individual and immediate family, touching broader society and the global community in unprecedented ways". How we choose to address these challenges and maximize the opportunities of a

growing older population will determine whether society will reap the benefits of the longevity dividend.

UNFPA launched on 1 October this year the international report on “Ageing in the Twenty First Century: A Celebration and a Challenge”.

The report found three areas that required speedy actions in order to ensure a society for all ages in which both young and old are given the opportunity to contribute to development and share in its benefits: 1) an urgent need to guarantee income security and access to essential health and social services for older people; 2) a significantly stronger investment in young people combined with flexible employment, lifelong learning and retraining opportunities to enable and encourage current generations of older people to remain in the labor market; and 3) a stronger involvement of governments, civil society, communities, families and older persons themselves to develop a new culture in which older persons are considered active members of their society and their contributions recognized and promoted.

In summary, conscious policies are required to i) foster full, productive and remunerative employment, (ii) promote and invest in life cycle savings, and (iii) adopt progressive social transfers, in forms suitable to country contexts. The Post 2015 development agenda should consider relevant specific goals on social security coverage and fiscal and generational sustainability of pension and health care systems, as well as measurable targets for improvements in health status among older people.

Urbanization

Another important demographic trend across the world is accelerated urbanization. The world urban population, close to 3.6 billion in 2011, will grow by about 72 percent between now and 2050, bringing the urban population up to 6.3 billion (about the whole world population in 2002). The vast majority of this growth will occur in less developed regions. The urban population in the developing world is likely to double, from 2.7 billion in 2011 to 5.1 billion in 2050 not to mention that much of the future urban growth will be made up of poor people. An important issue for consideration is how countries in the region will go about preparing for this inevitable urban future, which presents challenges but also development opportunities, particularly taking into account that many countries will face the effect of climate change and it is in urban areas where most mitigation and adaptation plans will be focused.

A post-2015 development agenda should therefore prioritize planning for future urban growth, including appropriate infrastructure and access to basic education, health including reproductive health, and other services, so that countries can reap the benefits of economies of scale and greater efficiency, as well as ensure that urban trajectories are beneficial to all urban residents.

A particular area of concern is the vulnerable populations that are at risk of displacement or whose livelihoods are threatened due to climatic changes in environmentally fragile areas. The development agenda should pay particular attention to identifying such populations, and invest in reducing their vulnerability and enhancing their adaptive capacity, including planning for potential migration and relocation of people.

International Migration

Moving on, international migration is also a major feature of population dynamics and it is mostly driven by economic motivations and the prospect of better living standards. Understanding international migration requires accepting that there are different patterns in different countries and sub-regions, which is part of the complexity of this phenomenon in this region. As migration is becoming more and more prevalent, having a large impact on all aspects of life, it should be incorporated as part of national policy frameworks, based on good data and evidence and ensuring that the rights of migrants are upheld, protected and respected.

A post 2105 development agenda should therefore ensure international dialogue and cooperation on migration between sending and receiving countries, to ensure that migration occurs in safe and legal conditions, with full respect for human rights. It should strengthen the mechanisms that enable migrants to contribute to development in both origin and destination countries. In particular, the economic contributions of migrants to their home countries, including remittances and the issuance and utilization of “diaspora bonds”, should be strengthened, and the adverse consequences, such as discrimination in host countries, should be addressed.

While the first set of issues, i.e., population dynamics and changing demographic structures, can be construed largely as cross-cutting, enabling factors for post-2015 development goals, the second set of issues, i.e., access to quality reproductive health services within a gender equality framework, protection of reproductive rights and bridging disparities, should be included in and monitored through clear post 2015 development goal and target frameworks.

Let me elaborate.

Reproductive Health, Protection of Reproductive Rights, Youth and Bridging Disparities

It so happens that inequalities among and within countries are most felt in the access to basic social services, health and reproductive health in particular. While many countries are witnessing economic growth and notable progress towards the achievement of the

Millennium Development Goals at the national level, in-country disparities in access to health and to reproductive health services are widening.

One of the greatest health inequalities today is in maternal mortality. It is true that globally, the number of maternal deaths has decreased from 543 000 in 1990 to 287 000 in 2010 and maternal mortality ratio (MMR) declined from 400 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births in 1990 to 210 in 2010. However, more than 800 women continue to die every day as a result of pregnancy or childbirth. African and South Asian countries rank first and second highest in the world respectively in terms of MMR. We all know that high maternal mortality is an indicator of an inadequate health care system, with poor quality of care and limited access to services. Maternal mortality also indicates that a woman's rights to life and health are being violated.

On the other hand, and despite their proven impact on social and economic development, family planning programmes and the provision of reproductive health services have lagged behind on the national development agenda. This has hindered efforts to decrease maternal deaths and morbidities, and prevent unintended pregnancies.

Furthermore, the regional figures on unmet need for family planning disguise the reality of many vulnerable and marginalized groups. The poor, the rural, those from minority ethnic groups and socially excluded, and the female adolescents and the young are especially at a disadvantage in terms of accessing reproductive health services.

Indeed, an estimated 645 million women in the developing world were using modern contraceptives in 2012; that is 42 million more than in 2008. However, about half of this increase was due to population growth. In addition, 222 million women continue to have an unmet need for modern contraceptives. However, in the 69 poorest countries, the number of women who face an unmet need for modern contraceptives actually increased from 153 to 162 million between 2008 and 2012. Bridging women's unmet need for modern contraception in developing countries would prevent an additional 54 million unintended pregnancies, including 21 million unplanned births, would help avoid 26 million abortions (of which 16 million are unsafe) and seven million miscarriages. It would also prevent 79,000 maternal deaths and 1.1 million infant deaths.

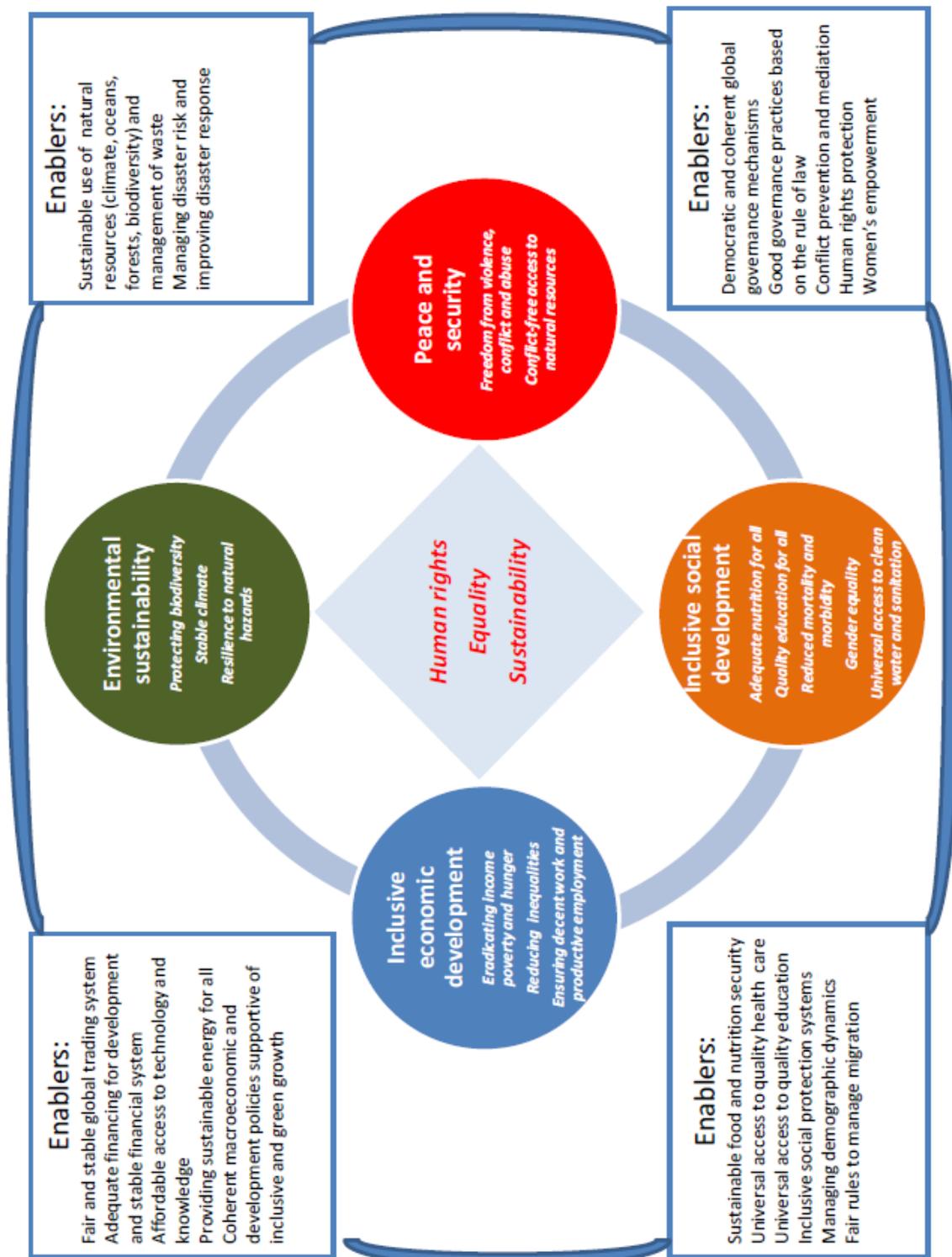
Indeed, equal and sustained access to quality reproductive health services, promoting gender equality and empowering women and protecting their reproductive rights, reducing infant, child and maternal mortality and improving maternal health are therefore indispensable ingredients of a post 2015 development agenda. Such an agenda should provide directions towards reducing structural and system based inequalities in accessing quality reproductive health and other social services. This is central to development and certainly central to ending poverty and should therefore be reflected in post 2015 development targets and sub-targets.

Finally, investments in young people, curbing persistent child marriages, keeping female adolescents longer in schools and enabling youth to access friendly reproductive health information and quality services represent another critical population issue and should be an essential component of the broader global development agenda.

In other words, goals pertaining to population and reproductive health issues are intimately linked to the development of a post-2015 agenda that eliminates extreme poverty, ensures economic growth, promotes peace and security, and is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. These goals include achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health, promoting reproductive rights, reducing maternal mortality, and preventing HIV infection. All of these goals are crucial to accelerating progress on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda and achieving Millennium Development Goals 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Allow me at this juncture to take a moment to highlight the post 2015 vision that has been articulated in the SG's Report and highlight the place that population dynamics should occupy in this vision.

Figure 1. An integrated framework for realizing the “future we want for all” in the post-2015 UN development agenda



A post-2015 development agenda should therefore consider adopting measurable targets regarding achieving better education, sustainable job creation, and the removal of barriers to accessing reproductive health care for improving young people's opportunities and their wellbeing, and for maximizing their contribution to society.

In summary, the post 2015 development agenda should therefore address the following issues:

- i) Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights (SRHR) as a pathway to sustainable development and to an individual and social wellbeing;
- ii) Managing and incorporating country-specific demographic dynamics in national sustainable development policies; and
- iii) Promoting gender equality

The above goals can and should be facilitated by "enablers" including

- a) achieving peace and security (at the global, regional and local level);
- b) securing macro-economic and financial stability (primarily at the global level; examples include access to markets and mutually beneficial trade terms, access to technology and so on);
- c) committing to participatory and transparent governance at the national and sub-national level; and
- d) committing to environmental sustainability (including strengthening cushioning and improving disaster management knowledge, technology, structures and practices).

In the end, it is critical that the issue of data availability, provision of scientific evidence for policy dialogue and policy development, and clearly defined, robust and policy relevant indicators is given due consideration in the post 2015 development framework. Monitoring progress and accounting for impact or remaining gaps is an indispensable management and governance tool as it enables countries ascertain the performance of their policies and the quality delivery of their strategies and intervention programmes.