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**General debate on national experience in population matters:
new trends in migration — demographic aspects**

Statement submitted by Family Care International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.9/2013/1.



Statement

Recognizing that migrants and displaced persons often have limited access to reproductive health care and face threats to their reproductive health and rights, Family Care International welcomes the theme of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Population and Development, “New trends in migration: demographic aspects”.

According to the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, in 2010, the total number of international migrants worldwide was estimated at 214 million persons; almost half were women. There were an estimated 33 million international migrants under the age of 20 worldwide and adolescents accounted for approximately 15 per cent of all international migrants. While migration can provide important opportunities for women and adolescents to improve their lives and the lives of their families, women migrants, displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers face a range of challenges in accessing health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services, owing to an uncertain legal status, discrimination and negative attitudes from health-care providers, and financial, linguistic and cultural barriers.

Paragraph 7.11 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development reads: “Migrants and displaced persons in many parts of the world have limited access to reproductive health care and may face specific serious threats to their reproductive health and rights. Services must be particularly sensitive to the needs of individual women and adolescents and responsive to their often powerless situation, with particular attention to those who are victims of sexual violence.” Women migrants are particularly vulnerable to sexual coercion and sexual and gender-based violence, which violate their rights, increase their risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV, and of having an unwanted pregnancy, and make the need for accessible services to address their emotional and physical needs all the more urgent. Young people face a range of challenges in accessing the sexual and reproductive health care they need, including a lack of evidence-based information about sexual and reproductive health, social stigma or judgemental attitudes by clinic staff, financial constraints and laws prohibiting the provision of contraceptives to unmarried or younger adolescents. These barriers are even greater for adolescent migrants. Adolescent migrants, especially young women, are also at increased risk of exploitation owing to separation from their families and communities, economic instability and power imbalances resulting from their uncertain legal status.

Barriers to accessing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services, including access to contraception and safe abortions and a comprehensive sexual education, have been shown to result in higher rates of maternal mortality among migrant women compared with residents in both developed and developing countries. According to the Reproductive Health Response in Crises Consortium, refugees and internally displaced women often lack access to family planning services, pre- and postnatal care, emergency obstetric services and skilled care during childbirth. Women affected by conflict or disaster who are displaced from their homes and communities also face a higher risk of maternal death or injury. Over 60 per cent of maternal deaths worldwide occur in 10 countries, 9 of which are currently experiencing or emerging from conflict. Forced displacement also

increases women's vulnerability to sexual- and reproductive health-related violations.

Governments should ensure that the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and other global and regional agreements on international migration in relation to development are implemented in order to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and information for all migrants, regardless of their legal status, and to address the inequalities, violence and discrimination faced by women and adolescent migrants.
