



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

22nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 October 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 132 and 136.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee.”

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 132

Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/69/422)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution entitled “United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response”. The Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 69/3).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 136 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/69/428)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/69/428). The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution,

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entitled “Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter”, without a vote. May I take that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 69/4).

Agenda item 13

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

(b) Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/69/62 and A/69/122)

The President: As members will recall, the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014”, was held on 22 September 2014, in accordance with resolutions 65/234 of 22 December 2010 and 67/250 of 21 February 2013.

It has been brought to my attention that many Member States were not able to deliver their statements at that special session. I wish to state my understanding of the discontent felt by the delegations that were unable to deliver their statements within the designated time frame at that important gathering. The Secretariat is also fully aware of the concerns raised by those delegations, and it is indeed regrettable that a large number of Member States were unable to speak at that meeting.

In light of what happened, I have convened this plenary meeting today under sub-item (b) of agenda item 13, entitled “Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development”, earlier than scheduled in order to provide an additional opportunity for Member States to further deliberate on the topic and to have their statements entered into the record.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d’Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and express the gratitude of the Ivorian delegation for the resumption of this debate. It gives Member States that could not express themselves on 22 September at the twenty-ninth special session, on the Programme of Action

of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, the opportunity to do so today. Côte d’Ivoire would therefore like to make its contribution to the follow-up to the implementation of the commitments made in Cairo to give appropriate responses to the persistent problems of population and development.

My country has made significant progress in key areas of the Programme of Action, although those advances were slowed down by the decade of crisis that the country experienced. In the area of education, for example, Côte d’Ivoire’s march towards universal education has resulted in an increase in primary school gross enrolment, which rose from less than 72 per cent in 1998 to 94.7 per cent in 2013, with a parity index that increased by 41 per cent. Furthermore, the Government has just adopted a measure aimed at making primary school attendance mandatory from the age of six, starting with the 2015-2016 school year.

With regard to health, efforts undertaken in the fight against HIV/AIDS have allowed us to lower its prevalence rate to 3.7 per cent in 2012, as against 4.7 per cent in 2005. The child mortality rate for children under 5 years fell by 27 per cent, going from 149.5 per 1,000 in 1994 to 108 per 1,000 in 2012. Maternal mortality, after falling from 597 in 1994 to 543 per 100,000 live births in 2005, unfortunately had an increase to 614 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2012.

The prevalence of modern contraceptives nearly tripled, from 5.7 per cent in 1994 to 14 per cent in 2012. Unmet needs for family planning, though still high, are clearly decreasing. Those results and others derive from the institutional reforms and operational interventions aimed at putting the population at the centre of the development process. Thus, several laws have been promulgated, and several strategic documents have also been made operational.

The demographic profile of Côte d’Ivoire is marked by a high fertility rate, estimated at 5 children per female in 2012, with adolescent girls contributing 13 per cent of that figure. The population growth rate of 2.7 per cent remains one of the highest in the world. The dropout rate in school also remains high, especially for girls, because of poverty, sociocultural problems and the scourge of early pregnancies. Furthermore, the combined effects of climate change, with the resulting drop in rainfall, water supplies and forest cover, have further impoverished the population, created food insecurity and worsened public health problems.

With a view to facing those challenges, the Ivorian Government is working to be able to offer universal health coverage so as to provide the public with better access to health services, increase the efficiency and availability of the health system, increase the access of youth and women to reproductive and family planning health services, and continue the far-reaching national programme, entitled “Zero pregnancies in the schools”, now under way.

Côte d’Ivoire is active in building the foundations of its successful emergence in 2020. An important pillar will be the effort to improve the demographic dividend by means of the necessary strategic investments for a strong and prosperous economy. My country is delighted with the efforts already under way on the part of the international community, and invites it to increase its efforts with a view to achieving the goals agreed upon on the issues of population and development at the major international conferences and international meetings.

Our common will to build a more just and equitable world depends indisputably on promoting human rights. In that regard, Côte d’Ivoire is committed to respecting the rights of the individual without exception. My delegation thus reaffirms the commitments that my country has made, both internationally and regionally, in accordance with our institutional and regulatory provisions, our development priorities, our customs, cultures and beliefs.

From that point of view, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014” (A/69/62). Given our concern about the promotion of sustainable development, my country reaffirms its commitment to the implementation beyond 2014 of the ICPD Programme of Action and sincerely hopes that the well-being of humankind will be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Laram (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome this important meeting, which gives us an opportunity to express our opinions regarding the holding two weeks ago of a special session of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

As an international community, we have highlighted development and implementation and the progress

achieved so far. Regrettably, my country still has gaps with respect to implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We are facing challenges and inequalities of a socioeconomic nature.

Many people live in abject poverty throughout the world, which is a major challenge that undermines the development efforts undertaken. I would therefore like to avail myself of this opportunity to highlight the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action, which asserts that human rights and human dignity are a sine qua non for sustainable development. It is also a fact that we are facing a number of recurring global challenges. We attach particular importance to the issues of development and population. In that respect, we have made tireless efforts to implement the agreed development objectives. A number of indices and reports demonstrate that most of the objectives set in the Millennium Development Goals will have been met before 2015.

Qatar has established a national comprehensive strategy with respect to development. Our national vision for 2030 is to transform Qatar into a developed State that can protect its development and give everyone in our country, as well as future generations, a high standard of living. Qatar’s national vision has produced long-term results and has allowed us to create a framework in which to develop national strategies and implementation plans. The State adopted a population policy in 2009. We have undertaken the implementation of that policy, striking a balance between population growth and sustainable development. We shall also seek to implement the sustainable development goals, as well as the main elements of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

We reiterate today our reservations regarding some controversial issues set out in the Secretary-General’s reports (A/69/62 and A/69/122) that have to do with follow-up measures for the ICPD Programme of Action. Those measures exceed what was agreed in the Cairo Plan of Action. There is no consensus on matters relating to sexual orientation, sexual identity, abortion, health and sexual rights, reproductive and sexual health, or global sexual education. That is why we would like to reaffirm one of the major principles of the Cairo Programme of Action - the sovereign right of all countries to implement recommendations that are in line with their national legislations and that fully respect the various moral and religious values and

cultural backgrounds of their peoples, in conformity with internationally recognized human rights.

Much remains for us to do, working together as Governments and individuals, to implement the objectives and goals of the ICPD Programme of Action - to increase the standard of living of everyone by adopting suitable development and population policies and programmes that will help us fight poverty, achieve economic growth, develop human resources and guarantee human rights for all. We hope that our debate will yield positive, concrete results and comprehensive measures that will facilitate our doing everything we can to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. In establishing a post-2015 development plan, we need to focus on the issues highlighted in the Cairo Plan of Action, especially women, the elderly, youth, and persons with disabilities.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that Qatar will spare no effort to continue to honour one of its major commitments, that is, respect for and the promotion and protection of human rights. We also want to restate our commitment to implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, which is considered a major milestone or reference point for all matters relating to population. Our commitment will continue even after 2014, and we will implement the Programme of Action with full respect for religious, ethical and cultural values and backgrounds and in accordance with our national legislation.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), India remains committed to the consensus reached at the ICPD and subsequent reviews. India has achieved substantial declines in infant and maternal mortality rates as a consequence of targeted interventions to promote institutional deliveries, as well as a number of other interventions relating to, for example, the provision of free medicines, diagnostics and nutrition. The proportion of institutional births has now reached 85 per cent, and the Government is working to further expand the programme.

Securing and promoting the health and well-being of young people, especially adolescents, and of women and children is a priority. Reproductive health commodities and services, including comprehensive abortion care, are now among the 20 essential services of universal health coverage to be provided free of cost. Besides strengthening the financial commitment to

health services, the State will maintain its coverage of the 100 million women currently using contraceptives and is committed to adding still more women to the programme by 2020. Overall, our focus is on expanding health care for all, as well as on meeting the challenges posed by a changing demographic profile and the gradual shift of attention from communicable to non-communicable diseases.

In education, our current focus is on improving quality, the expansion of secondary and tertiary education, improving equity and accessibility for girls and women, and skills development to improve employability.

We have recently launched a national adolescent health strategy, which comprises the provision of information, counselling, commodities and services, and which will cover all our 250 million adolescents. The strategy realigns the existing approaches in order to focus on community-based health promotion and prevention. It identifies six priority areas of action: reproductive and sexual health, nutrition, mental health, injuries and violence, including domestic and gender-based violence, substance abuse and non-communicable diseases.

Ensuring gender equality, promoting women's empowerment and combating discrimination and violence against women remain a priority. We have adopted enabling legislative and policy frameworks for the advancement of women and have undertaken programmes to generate awareness and sensitization in order to fight social prejudices and stereotypes. The Government has launched a new rights-based, non-discriminatory, adolescent-friendly programme that reaches out to an adolescent population that is 250 million strong.

We are firmly addressing the problem of violence against women. The amendments to the criminal law last year significantly broaden the definition of sexual assault and harassment, include new types of violent behaviour such as stalking, and so on, and aim for greater accountability of public officials. The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013 aims to provide a safer work environment for women. Those measures supplement the existing framework for dealing with the crimes of trafficking, domestic violence and sexual offences against children. As part of a multisectoral approach to violence against women, and following up on our statement at the sixty-sixth World Health

Assembly last year, the Government of India worked with experienced activists from civil society and legal and mental health experts and drew up guidelines and protocols for the medico-legal care of survivors of sexual violence.

India has been proactive in sharing its development experience with other developing countries, including in the areas of health care and telemedical services. India is also a major source of cost-effective generic medicines of good quality that are critically important to public health strategies in many developing countries.

The Secretary-General's report entitled "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62) identifies several challenges and opportunities. Given the importance of population and development issues, we expect these to be adequately reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. The international community must enhance its cooperative and mutually supportive role. The provision of financial resources, technology transfer, technical assistance, access to medicines and capacity-building, especially in relation to developing countries, have not reached optimum levels.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our firm commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action and to taking the ICPD agenda forward beyond 2014 to tackle current challenges both nationally and globally.

Mrs. Bunge (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting.

The Argentine Republic attaches great importance to the debate on population in the context of the three dimensions of the sustainable development agenda - social, economic and environmental. We are here to renew and deepen our commitment to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2015.

Challenges change and reality evolves, so policies and strategies also have to evolve in order to remain valid. In that search, we believe that the first meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in 2013, was of special importance because it allowed us to see how much progress we have made in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action through substantive policies based on national

strategies. The virtuous process of change which the countries of Latin America have experienced in political, economic, social and cultural terms since the holding of the Cairo Conference in 1994 is reflected in the many policies, programmes and plans developed with a view to achieving the highest quality of life for our populations.

We take this opportunity to welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62). Argentina was one of the countries that contributed to the world survey on the Cairo Conference beyond 2014, which provides timely information for evaluating the considerable progress achieved and the challenges that remain in implementing the Programme. We confirm that human rights and equality are the core of the analytical approach underlying the report, and we agree that investment in individual human rights, capacity-building and respect for the dignity of everyone, without any discrimination and throughout a person's life cycle, are the basis of sustainable development.

The actions undertaken by the Argentine State since 2003 show how fully aligned we are with the objectives of the Programme of Action. In some cases, the Argentine Government has set and achieved goals that are more demanding than those set internationally and has registered significant progress in formulating and implementing public policies in all priority areas. The political will and the determination of the Argentine Republic to ensure in each decision the full exercise of human rights are reflected in the premise of helping people to become agents for change.

Among the achievements of the Argentine Republic in that regard we would note the Immigration Act of 2004, which represented a paradigm shift in the Argentine migration policy, granting the right to migrate, not migrate and return, as well as guaranteeing the access of migrants to education, health and social services regardless of their migration status.

The national responsible sexual and reproductive health programme, which was established by law in 2002, guarantees universal access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, thereby closing gaps in accessibility to and quality of care. It promotes decision-making that is free of discrimination, coercion or violence, thereby enabling women to participate in decision-making,

including on family planning, and helping to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality, prevent undesired pregnancies and promote the sexual health of adolescents.

Law 26150 (2006), on comprehensive sex education, guarantees the right of all children and adolescents to receive comprehensive sexual education and requires systematic action on sex education throughout the entire public education system.

The cross-cutting social policy underlying the universal child allowance of 2009 has a positive effect on education, health and gender equality and is of direct benefit to the socially vulnerable populations. The foregoing are just a few examples.

Finally, we would mention the adoption of Law 26862 (2013) on medically assisted reproduction, which guarantees comprehensive access to those practices and requires public and private social protection programmes, as well as prepaid medical care, to cover expenses.

We are aware of the challenges that remain in terms of improving the quality of life of our populations and the need to guarantee equal and equitable treatment for all. The results of the review undertaken by the United Nations show that, despite the important progress made in reducing poverty and improving economic growth since the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, many countries still have problems in terms of satisfying basic needs - decent work, full employment and access to social protection. The gains made motivate us to renew the commitment to continuing our work on outstanding issues. At the regional level, we rely on the Montevideo Consensus as a framework for national progress based on the paradigm of equality, inclusion and equity and a people-centred approach to rights, family and community.

We are fully committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action, bearing in mind the regional review and the recommendations for beyond 2014. We understand that that perspective brings indispensable elements for sustainable development and should be incorporated in the post-2015 development agenda, based on the agreements achieved in the framework of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

Argentina has decided to continue to embody a political, economic and social model underlying a State that is active and committed to the improvement of our

reality in the quest for open, transparent and democratic solutions.

Ms. Kiernan (United States of America): It is an honour to speak on behalf of the United States and to join other Member States, United Nations agencies and civil society in renewing our full support for the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), adopted in Cairo nearly 20 years ago to this day.

Let me begin by commending the work that led to the special session and that has informed our discussions. I want to thank the United Nations Population Fund, the ICPD Beyond 2014 secretariat and the United Nations Population Division for their many contributions.

The 1994 Cairo Conference changed the global discussion, illuminating what becomes more resoundingly clear with each passing year, namely, that human rights, gender equity, global health and development must go hand in hand. The Cairo goals remain the foundation of our work to promote reproductive health and rights and the empowerment of women and young people. As United States Secretary of State John Kerry pointed out, societies where women and girls are safe, where women are empowered to exercise their rights and move their communities forward - those societies are more prosperous and more stable, not occasionally, but always.

The international community has made impressive strides, especially in education and in reducing maternal and child mortality, but progress has been uneven and has left many behind. According to the operational review and the index report prepared for our discussions on the ICPD Beyond 2014 (see A/69/122), many countries agree that those gaps require urgent attention. To make reproductive health and respect for reproductive rights a reality for all, we must get health services to those who still lack them, including many women, young people and those caught in conflicts and crises. We must also stand up for every individual, regardless of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity, and protect the rights of individuals to make their own choices about sexuality and reproduction, and to make these choices free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

We must do more to empower young people. Over 40 per cent of the world's population is under the age of 25. The choices they make will have profound consequences for themselves and the world. Many must navigate in treacherous waters. More than two

million adolescents live, for instance, with HIV. Three million girls each year are subjected to genital mutilation or cutting, and many will suffer lifelong health consequences as a result. Despite near universal commitment to eliminate early and forced marriage, one in three girls in developing countries will be married before she is 18. More than 15 million girls will give birth each year. Those early pregnancies can kill, cause lifelong disabilities, cut off opportunities and extinguish hope. Many young mothers never finish school. Their chance to learn and earn enough to lift their families and communities out of poverty may be lost forever.

We must take more concrete and decisive steps to reach our goal of greater gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. We must end the scourge of gender-based violence, both in peace time and in war time. We must end impunity for perpetrators, provide services to survivors and prevent, not just punish, such human rights abuses. Integrating sexual and reproductive health services is also a priority. Providing maternal health care, contraception, and the treatment and prevention of sexually-transmitted illnesses, as a package, is not just a matter of convenience, it is a matter of life and death. We know that providing family planning to all who want it could prevent nearly one-third of the estimated 300,000 maternal deaths that occur every year.

Finally, we must keep the eyes of the world focused on achieving the ICPD goals beyond 2014. The two decades since Cairo have confirmed that Governments have chosen the right path, and we must continue to push forward. The post-2015 development agenda offers an opportunity for the global community to come together around a new set of development goals for the next 15 years, and the United States stands behind of that. We fully support a dedicated goal to promote gender equality and empower women and girls. Recognizing that aspiration could be one of the most transformative goals we could set in the post-2015 development agenda.

The special session has been an opportunity for everyone to reaffirm support for the ICPD agenda and to ensure that we address those issues in the post-2015 development agenda. We must seize this chance, and the United States is committed to doing its part.

Ms. Stener (Norway): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We are encouraged by the overwhelming support for and commitment to the

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) expressed by the world leaders at the special session on the findings and recommendations of the report on the ICPD Beyond 2014 review. We believe that the outcomes of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review and the special session provide the United Nations system and Member States with a solid foundation for continued efforts to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Among the many important recommendations for future work in this area, we would especially like to underline the need for access to comprehensive sexual education. The solid support from world leaders at the special session is also a strong message about the need to include universal access, on a priority basis, to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the post-2015 development agenda.

While we recommit to the promises made in Cairo and welcome the enhanced commitments and efforts that are being made to fully implement the ICPD, we believe that it is time to go beyond the Cairo Programme of Action. Every person has the right to be free from discrimination and to fully enjoy all human rights without distinctions of any kind, including those based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Finally, on a practical note, the full statement that Norway's State Secretary planned to deliver on 22 September has been submitted to PaperSmart.

Ms. Raviolova-Borovik (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful for the convening of today's plenary meeting. It is our view that the Cairo Programme of Action of 1994 remains the groundbreaking reference point for inter-State cooperation in the area of population and development. The priorities and strategic approaches agreed to 20 years ago are still fully relevant and vital.

The Russian Federation attaches great significance to the review of the implementation of the decisions of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), including in the context of agreeing on new priorities for global socioeconomic cooperation in the post-2015 period. We are convinced that population issues should be adequately reflected in the sustainable development goals being established. In that context, the key challenge, we believe, is satisfying the basic requirements of the population in terms of access to health, education, food, water, energy and employment. We are persuaded that it is counter-

productive to focus international efforts on promoting concepts that are not universally supported or that run counter to the social values of entire groups of countries. Therefore, the Programme of Action should not be reviewed but rather should serve in future as a political framework and provide guiding principles for the work of the United Nations and of Member States.

Achieving progress in demographic development is a priority of the State policy of the Russian Federation, including in the context of sustainable socioeconomic progress. Among our strategic challenges were overcoming the demographic crisis at the start of the 1990s and comprehensive support for the family.

The recent special session to review the ICPD Programme of Action was to become an optimal platform for an open and comprehensive consideration of population issues with a view to advancing the global development agenda in the post-2015 period. We deeply regret the fact that the Russian delegation and the delegations of 60 other countries were not able to present their population scenarios during the special session. We hope that in the future that situation will not be repeated. Member States can find the text of the statement that was to have been delivered by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly on our Mission's website. We understand that it will also be available on the websites of the United Nations Population Fund and the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that the Russian Federation wants to continue dialogue with all our partners on the issues of population, and we are prepared to strengthen our multilateral cooperation in that area.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding work and elaborate reports, "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62) and "Recurrent themes and key elements identified during the sessions of the Commission on Population and Development" (A/69/122).

This year, we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) with a comprehensive assessment of the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action as a critical opportunity to take stock of achievements and remaining challenges and to define a

clear vision for future action. The forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development and the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action on the ICPD, held on 22 September, provided appropriate forums for deliberations in that regard.

Here, let me briefly comment on the status of ICPD implementation in my country over the past 20 years. Georgia, while going through a socioeconomic and political transition, has made significant progress vis-à-vis the ICPD Programme of Action. The priorities in the 2000 Cairo Plan of Action in the areas of population development, reproductive health, women and youth empowerment, protection of displaced populations, an enabling environment for children with disabilities and for the elderly have been reflected in our national development plans and legislation. Historic gains were documented in reproductive health, including significant decreases in maternal, infant and under-five mortality rates, all of which were basically cut in half. Abortion rates have also decreased by half from 3.7 per cent to 1.6 per cent, with a parallel increase in a contraceptive prevalence rate from 20 per cent to 54 per cent. Screening programmes for breast and cervical cancer were introduced in 2005, and universal access to HIV treatment has been maintained since 2003. Georgia introduced its flagship universal health care programme in February 2013. Whereas two years ago, just half of the population was covered by public or private health insurance, today, every citizen of the country has a basic package of health services.

The expansion of social protection schemes has provided a more reliable security net for socially vulnerable population groups, including families living in poverty, old-age pensioners, internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities. Last year, old-age pensions and social allowances were increased from the 2012 baselines by 50 per cent and 100 per cent, respectively.

Women's empowerment has also been given high priority in our national development agenda. Georgia exceeded a 10 per cent threshold for women's representation in the Parliament in 2012. Women hold key positions and ministerial portfolios in justice, education and foreign affairs and lead the National Security Council and the Central Election Commission of Georgia. The economic empowerment of women has also been visible since 1994, with 30 per cent of women

being primary breadwinners and 20 per cent heading business enterprises.

Based on an international assessment, Georgia has been ranked among the countries successful in combating trafficking, an advance achieved under the leadership of the National Coordination Council against Trafficking in Human Beings.

In response to young people's special needs and because of the importance of investing in youth for the country's sustainable development, a national youth policy was adopted earlier this year and elaborated through a participatory process with the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, based on knowledge gained from surveys of the sexual and reproductive health of young people and youth situation analysis.

Despite those achievements, however, much remains to be done – and not just in my country, but in many parts of the world. We therefore endorse the urgency of the findings of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review, which show that, despite significant gains in poverty reduction and economic growth since the ICPD, many have been left behind, with basic needs unfulfilled, and lacking meaningful work or access to social protection or public services in health or education, and that there are still significant barriers that prevent many people in the world from enjoying their human rights.

To tackle the remaining challenges in my country, specific measures are being taken, aimed at ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the benefits of which will be enjoyed by the whole population. That is emphasized in the socioeconomic development strategy of my country for 2020, which provides for demographic improvement, equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, the fulfilment of young people's special needs, the integration and participation of older persons in society, the further enhancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the improvement of the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data for informed policy-making. My country has taken several legislative and institutional steps to address human rights challenges, including the adoption of a national human rights strategy for 2014-2020, a national human rights action plan for 2014-2015 and a new antidiscrimination law.

In conclusion, let me underline once again what my Prime Minister said from this very rostrum (see A/S-29/PV.1), namely, that my country is proud to join the international community in reaffirming

its support for the ICPD Programme of Action and stands ready to further contribute to that effort. As reported in the record of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2013 High-level Regional Conference, "Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century", we support the human rights-centred approach for the post-2014 programme of action. Furthermore, the experience clearly shows that only a comprehensive, results-oriented, rights- and evidence-based strategic planning process that engages all concerned stakeholders and focuses both on access to and the quality of services can ensure progress towards the equality, individual dignity, well-being and sustainable development of all nations.

Mr. Nekiguchi (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly, the staff of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the other staff who contributed to the successful organization of this meeting. It is an honour for me to take this opportunity to review the developments since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), in Cairo, and to convey our views and position on the world beyond 2014.

The key to addressing population and development issues is without a doubt the empowerment of women. It is women who play a vital role in the human life cycle, from birth through old age. But they are also among the most vulnerable members of society. They need universal access to sexual and reproductive health services as well as to information and education. It is essential to ensure their fundamental rights.

The ICPD Programme of Action has served as the international community's guideline on population and development issues. Based on a people-centred approach focusing on individuals, the ICPD Programme of Action has promoted gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and has contributed to the achievement of human security, which is one of the most important guiding principles of Japan's development assistance strategy.

Japan fully supports the ICPD Programme of Action and has long been committed to its implementation. Immediately following the Cairo Conference, we launched Japan's Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS – a seven-year programme package, amounting to \$3 billion, to promote family planning, health education and HIV/AIDS prevention. It has been followed by various additional assistance packages

focusing on sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and the empowerment of women.

Japan continues to make contributions. The advancement of the role of women has been and will continue to be one of the pillars of Japanese official development assistance. At last year's session of the General Assembly, my Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, highlighted "womenomics" (see A/68/PV.12) and pledged to implement assistance in excess of \$3 billion over three years that would place women at the centre. As part of this pledge, Japan organized a symposium of the World Assembly for Women in Tokyo one month ago.

In response to the recent humanitarian crisis of the abduction of schoolgirls by Boko Haram in Nigeria, Japan extended emergency grant aid amounting to \$855,000 to UNFPA and other organizations to support the abducted schoolgirls, their families and the affected communities.

Japan is also among the most active countries for international advocacy. The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population was established in 1974 as the world's first non-partisan organization devoted to population issues. Since then, it has made every effort to advocate for population issues in close cooperation with its counterparts around the world. The Government of Japan supports the activities of international parliamentarians through the Japan Trust Fund at UNFPA.

We seek to contribute also to the fruitful debate formulating the post-2015 development agenda. Japan, in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), recently co-organized a side event entitled "Gender, HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Post-2015 Framework" on the margins of the AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia. We renew our commitment to contributing to the successful implementation of the framework of ICPD beyond 2014.

Regarding the world beyond 2014, the international community must collaborate in order to cope with the many remaining and emerging challenges. Today we are faced with rapid demographic changes and an increasingly diversified set of concerns. In some regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, nations are still showing high increases in fertility. Many young people are suffering from challenges such as unemployment, malnutrition and poor access to health

services. It is essential to continue to provide support for those in need to satisfy their unmet needs, including sexual and reproductive health services as well as information and education.

At the other end of the spectrum, troublingly low fertility is found in some counties in regions such as East Asia and Europe. Many countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other regions are, in turn, exhibiting such trends. Given such trends, the world is ageing. Even a region where the population is still young today will have to face an aged society in the near future. An ageing society without healthy longevity will encounter many problems, including an increasing cost of social security. This may even threaten global economic sustainability. Staying healthy even as we grow older is therefore an important goal. If coupled with healthy and active longevity, an ageing society can be a blessing.

The proportion of our population that is aged has become the highest in the world; currently, one in four persons in Japan is older than 65 years of age. While major reforms have been and will continue to be planned to deal with the issues of an ageing society, Japan was ranked first among countries in terms of healthy life expectancy in both 1990 and 2010, according to a study published in the Lancet magazine in 2012.

The realization in Japan of universal health coverage as early as 1961 surely played an important role in achieving the remarkable health and longevity of the Japanese people. Universal health coverage reaches the entire population, including the most vulnerable and marginalized people, of all ages and generations. By eliminating disparities in access to essential health services, universal health coverage can also contribute to inclusive economic growth.

The world beyond 2014 must deal with diversified and complicated challenges and tasks. The tasks of ensuring maternal and child health, empowering women, girls and young people, providing sexual and reproductive health services, encouraging an economically active population and supporting an ageing society - all that rests on our shoulders. There may be no miracle solution, but one key element should be ensuring healthy lives for all at all ages. Throughout our life cycle, from childhood to adulthood and through old age, health and wellness are human needs. The promotion of a work/life balance and family-friendly environments, coupled with the implementation of measures for gender equality and appropriate health

systems as seen through the lens of universal health coverage, should be essential components of our strategy. Japan stands ready to share its experiences and extend its support in that regard.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Over the past two decades, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has provided a global road map for addressing population and development issues. Even today, the objectives stipulated in the 1994 Programme of Action seem valid and pertinent to present circumstances and requirements, though we need to be innovative as the world population ages. I commend the forward-looking approach of the founders of this comprehensive and balanced document.

The world is undergoing a historic transition in its population age structures, with fundamental impacts on the economic and social lives of its inhabitants. In order to have healthy, educated and prosperous populations that will be the engine and fortifier of sustainable development, we must combat poverty. That means that we must empower the poor and deprived and those who live in vulnerable situations. Addressing the challenges requires support for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development through enabled national societies within an enabling international environment. To lessen inequalities, Governments should undertake more robust steps in support of the equitable distribution of development gains. In the same vein, the provision of basic social services should remain an integral part of national and international measures to achieve poverty eradication.

More than half of Iran's population is under 30. This young generation is thought of as providing a golden opportunity, an asset for achieving sustainable development. At the same time, Iran's population is rapidly ageing. These developments will have noticeable economic and social implications. The shrinking of the innovative young generation, whose members offer efficient expertise and energy, is deemed an obstacle to securing resilient and sustained development in the long term. Following a few decades of successful low-fertility promotion policies, the Islamic Republic of Iran has recently decided to shift gears with a view to sustaining its population dynamics so as to ensure an empowered, educated and prosperous society.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been successful in achieving many of the ICPD objectives and Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) even prior to their deadlines. Iran's achievements in the areas of decreasing child and maternal mortality rates, enhancing access to medical services, including prenatal health-care services, and providing those affected by HIV/AIDS with care, treatment and prevention have received high recognition from relevant international bodies.

From a more general and sustained perspective, over the past two decades since the adoption of the ICPD outcome and its Programme of Action, Iran has worked continually to provide access to inclusive education to all boys and girls, even in the remotest parts of the country, as well as training and health care for all, without discrimination. The results are well reflected in relevant United Nations reports on the MDGs and the ICPD goals.

However, I would like to call the attention of the Assembly to the illegal and inhumane economic coercive measures and sanctions imposed against my people, with negative implications for their enjoyment of basic human rights as well as for our national development agenda, in flagrant contravention of the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and in disregard for the content of the ICPD. The sanctions have impeded timely and affordable access to the medicine, vaccines, equipment, commodities and technologies that are necessary for providing health care services. It is incumbent on the world community to stop such inhumane and illegal acts.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports entitled "Recurrent themes and key elements identified during the sessions of the Commission on Population and Development" (A/69/122) and "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62). However, I would like to emphasize that the use in the reports of controversial terms and phrases that do not enjoy consensus among the membership will not be helpful in advancing our future discussions on population issues, including the ICPD Beyond 2014.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that a safe and healthy world is attainable only if mothers no longer lose their lives giving birth, only if children are no longer robbed of their childhoods, and only if every girl and boy finds the doors of a school open to them and enjoys easy access to quality education and training, health care services and nutritious food.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): Indonesia acknowledges the great importance of the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly as the culmination of the activities mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/234. We take note of the findings of the operational review, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62). The review indicates that despite considerable achievements during the 20-year implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), progress in some critical aspects has been slow, unequal and fragmented, while new challenges and opportunities have emerged.

Indonesia believes that addressing the gap in the implementation of the Programme of Action requires new commitments, cooperation and concerted efforts by Governments at all levels, with the support and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector. As one of the pioneering countries, Indonesia has been implementing the ICPD Programme of Action for 20 years and is strongly committed to making real contributions to the achievement of progress in various areas of population and development. Indonesia's notable accomplishments include a reduction in the poverty level from 17 per cent in 2007 to 11.4 per cent in 2013, thanks to pro-poor, pro-job and pro-rural development policies.

In addition, Indonesia has maintained its focus on expanding access to basic services such as universal education for 12 years, universal coverage of health care and nutrition, and family planning; investing in basic infrastructure such as sanitation and clean water; involving poor communities in poverty-reduction efforts and capacity-building for that purpose; creating a social security system for the vulnerable and the poor; and reducing the significant disparities among the provinces as well as among urban and rural areas.

Indonesia, known as an international leader in family planning, recognizes the manifold aspects of the interrelationship between population growth and development through the changing emphasis of the stated goals in family planning. That can necessitate shifting the paradigm away from a target-driven orientation to one based on the concept of demand fulfilment. Increased attention to the quality of care has

been seen as an effective way to address unmet demands for reproductive health information and services. In so doing, Indonesia is pursuing some critical steps, primarily by developing human resources, improving infrastructure, developing medical protocols, promoting the integration of family planning services as benefit packages of national social health insurance, and tripling the budget for family planning over the past five years.

Indonesia will reach the top phase of the demographic dividend between 2028 and 2031, given the youth potential of 65 million that will be contributing to long-term socioeconomic development. Indonesia is committed to preparing and protecting the rights of young people in health, education and employment as well as to encouraging them to become active in community activities. The Government's initiative to include the health and reproductive rights of young people in the policy agenda through a programme entitled "Generation with a plan" has become a national movement, which is rooted in family norms and values.

The empowerment of women, gender equality and the health of youth and children have gained full recognition as integral parts of national development. Through appropriate efforts, Indonesia has managed to reduce the infant mortality rate from 57 for every 1000 live births in 1994 to 32 in 2012. In addressing the maternal mortality rate, the Government has improved people's access to reproductive health services, including maternal health services, by gradually providing universal health care coverage for all Indonesians. The national social health insurance system will cover 86 million Indonesians who are poor or at risk of falling into poverty, with premiums paid by the Government. By 2019, all Indonesians are expected to be covered. Furthermore, Indonesia has increased its national budget allocation for social security.

As an archipelagic country, Indonesia is at risk of bearing the negative effects of climate change. We continue to provide education, in particular to people living in coastal and agricultural areas, aimed at reducing exposure to catastrophic climate change. We are also endeavouring to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 26 per cent. Such efforts have increased understanding of the relationship between population dynamics and climate change and have improved local government capacity to undertake mitigation activities and develop early warning systems.

The special session is indeed timely, ensuring as it does that we learn lessons from the implementation of the MDGs and that the Programme of Action is inclusive and relevant within the post-2015 development agenda. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970) and the Assembly's adoption in September of the proposed goals (resolution 68/309). The post-2015 process will also provide opportunities to address new and emerging challenges, ensuring that no one is left behind, based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Indonesia would like to emphasize that the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action should be guided by the Programme of Action principles, including respect for national laws and development priorities, as well as religious and cultural values and diversity. We would also like to emphasize that in order to successfully address the gaps in the ICPD Programme of Action, its overall balance must be preserved. Imposing the priorities or value systems of one country on another is not acceptable and could threaten the hard-won 1994 Cairo consensus.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and its further implementation beyond 2014. Indonesia stands ready to contribute constructively in the upcoming intergovernmental processes.

Mr. Sarufa (Papua New Guinea): Let me thank you, Sir, for convening and presiding over this meeting at a moment when we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. We pledge to work with all stakeholders to ensure that we do not regress and that instead, in the course of implementing the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014, we consolidate the gains that we have made in the two decades since the Cairo Conference.

Papua New Guinea commends the excellent work that has been done, as reflected in the scope and depth of the report of the Commission on Population and Development on its forty-seventh session (E/2014/25-E/CN.9/2014/7) and the themes and key elements contained therein.

The ICPD Programme of Action is a visionary platform whose relevance and importance today cannot be overemphasized. Papua New Guinea therefore fully

subscribes and recommits to the Programme of Action itself and to its fundamental principles and objectives of stabilizing world population, promoting responsible, sustainable consumption and production, and protecting the environment so that sustainable development is possible for today's and future generations.

For my country, Papua New Guinea, a cornerstone of our development road map is a focus on people-centred population management and stabilization. It requires individuals, especially women and girls, to take on leadership roles and to assume full responsibility for improving their livelihoods through appropriate measures. This now forms an integral part of our national sustainable development road map, known as Vision 2050, and other subsidiary frameworks, including the 2014 national strategy for responsible sustainable development.

The post-2015 development agenda now under consideration must ensure that the important outcomes of the ICPD Programme of Action are adequately integrated in the new set of sustainable development goals. If humankind is to have a sustainable future, the drivers of population growth, poverty, environmental degradation and inequality urgently need to be decelerated at all levels, but that must be done in such a way as to ensure that basic human needs are met. We must be mindful that the natural environment can sufficiently provide for the needs of humankind but not for its greed.

We also urge that there be intensified commitment and strong ownership on the part of leaders and all stakeholders in order to accelerate affirmative action — including through education, advocacy, policy, legislation and enforcement at all levels — to promote the equality, empowerment and human rights of women, and also in order to ensure that there is zero tolerance for all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. Those are prerequisites for achieving not only the ICPD Programme of Action, but also the post-2015 development agenda that we adopt next September.

My Government values our women and girls, who constitute half of our population, as equal development partners. We are ensuring that gender empowerment and equality continue to be a cornerstone of our responsible sustainable development. As a demonstration of that commitment, Papua New Guinea has earmarked funding of \$10 million this year for various initiatives, including partnering with the United Nations Population Fund to

make available 40,000 contraceptive implants as an important intervention measure for the health of our women and girls of childbearing age. That will be scaled up to \$20 million by 2015. We are also partnering with our development partners by investing in upgrading vital midwifery skills, along with improving our health referral system to address the problems posed by complicated pregnancies.

Our Government has helped with the seed capital for the first national women's bank and microcredit schemes to involve our people at the grass-roots level and enable them to become owners and drivers of their future well-being. In addition, we are prioritizing small and medium-sized enterprises in a move to drive development forward. Furthermore, Papua New Guinea is also developing a national statistics development strategy to provide a road map for continually improving and updating our statistical information collection and management methods in the interests of improved decision-making. That includes embarking on a national biometric identification card system to record and maintain population information on our citizens.

Papua New Guinea recognizes that sexual and reproductive health and rights are central to good health and well-being, especially those of our women and adolescents, particularly girls, and therefore important for building our nation. We, the Member States, and the United Nations collectively must ensure that every woman has access throughout her life to a comprehensive and integrated package of high-quality sexual and reproductive health services, including modern forms of contraception and up-to-date sexuality education, in order that women's sexual and reproductive health and rights may be fully respected and protected.

Finally, at the Pacific regional level, in accordance with the declaration on human rights of the Pacific leaders, we are making positive progress in strengthening political will and efforts to achieve gender equality, empowerment and women's human rights, including through affirming sexual and reproductive health and rights. We recognize that the denial of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights perpetuates gender inequalities, exacerbates poverty and intensifies the intersecting forms of discrimination that women and girls face. We are making measured strides in our region to enable our women to increasingly have autonomy on matters regarding their sexuality and reproductive health and rights, free from coercion, discrimination or

violence. Much more work remains to be done, but we are moving in the right direction. We are committed to working with our development partners on this important development issue, provided that it is on our own terms.

Ms. Dwyer (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to deliver the statement that we had planned to deliver at the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, held on 22 September. Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on that occasion by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-29/PV.1).

At the outset, Ireland wishes to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, the United Nations Population Fund and the other organizations involved in providing us with the relevant reports. We appreciate in particular the substantial scale and the participatory nature of those exercises and consider that they provide a robust evidence base for our discussions, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Twenty years ago, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) established a global consensus that the recognition and fulfilment of human rights must be at the centre of any development agenda. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action, it is clear that much progress has been made. However, the reports before us also highlight the fact that aggregate progress often masks significant unfinished business, particularly when it comes to women's empowerment and in terms of access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The reports echo the conclusions from other forums that inequalities, both between and within countries, stubbornly persist. Those who have been left behind by inequality and discrimination, particularly women and girls, must now be given our absolute priority. The reports also highlight the new challenges that we must incorporate into our response, including climate change, migration, urbanization and the increased percentages of younger and older cohorts in our societies.

Ireland remains fully committed to playing our part in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. Last year, we launched Ireland's latest policy for international development, which recommits us to the protection and promotion of human rights throughout our work. The policy also contains an explicit commitment to the Cairo Programme of Action, through the support

of efforts that reduce maternal and infant mortality, promote universal access to reproductive health care, including antenatal care, and provide family planning services aimed at ensuring safe motherhood while allowing women to control their fertility.

In conclusion, let me state clearly that Ireland reaffirms our strong support for the ICPD Programme of Action. Twenty years on from Cairo, we are at a critical junction. As we prepare to finalize the post-2015 development agenda, the principles, objectives and outstanding commitments from the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action simply must be at the centre of the development agenda in the years ahead.

Mr. Naivalurua (Fiji): The Fiji delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and providing members with an opportunity to deliberate on actions required under the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

At the outset, Fiji welcomes the priority theme this year. The theme is most appropriate, as we now build on the important progress made, not only towards agreeing on the post-2015 development agenda, but more significantly in ensuring its effective implementation.

As we gather here 20 years after the ICPD, we are reminded of the global consensus on the integration of diverse aspects of population, development and human rights. Fiji's commitment to that global consensus, as well as its subsequent reviews, is evident in our evolving policies and programmes, as a result of which much progress has been recorded in the last two decades.

Although Fiji is faring well with the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, much remains to be done. Fiji is a small island developing State with over 300 islands and a population that is at once highly concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas and dispersed among remote outer-lying islands. The additional layer of existential challenges caused by vulnerabilities to climate change, frequent natural disasters and environmental degradation poses a challenge for Fiji in addressing all the core ICPD issues.

The juxtaposition of such stark situations in a small island developing State brings with it unique challenges for policy formulation and the implementation of twenty-first century sustainable development solutions. The availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services are a major element of the solutions, particularly in meeting the special needs of

the most vulnerable groups. The 2013 Constitution of Fiji encompasses a broad range of civil, political and socioeconomic rights, including the right to health and the progressive realization by every person of the right to health-care services, including reproductive health care.

Fiji also recognizes the importance of addressing inequalities and the empowerment of women and girls in equitable and sustainable development. On the eve of International Women's Day this year, Fiji launched its National Gender Policy, which is our guiding document for mainstreaming gender issues across all sectors and within all spheres of national life. The Government of Fiji is committed to increasing women's and young people's participation in decision-making and in political, social and economic processes at all levels. We believe that that will be all the more important as we look ahead to the post-2015 development agenda.

This is an opportune time for our delegation to underline the importance of data in development planning. My delegation has noted in United Nations reports and documentation that statistical data from our Pacific Islands region are patchy or often listed as missing. We would like to stress the importance of securing timely and appropriately disaggregated and verified data in order to design evidence-based programmes and development planning. Adequate resource allocation is urgently needed for that purpose, and we urge cooperative action between Governments, relevant United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to ensure the necessary capacity for effective integration of disaggregated, verified population data on our region.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Fiji's firm commitment to the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and to addressing priority areas, particularly where either the global review has found gaps in implementation or our own national analyses have found greater needs. To ensure a robust approach to implementation, we recognize that mutually supportive partnerships are crucial. We must garner resource allocation from all available sources and from partners that have clearly not reached optimal levels of cooperation to date.

It is imperative that national efforts be dedicated to bridging gaps in implementation, advancing the ICPD agenda and ensuring that ICPD issues are included in the post-2015 development agenda. Governments and

the lead United Nations agencies must place them high on their agendas if we are to maintain a sustainable planet for the generations to come.

Mrs. Namgyel (Bhutan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening the debate on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, and for providing the opportunity for my delegation to share our experiences, as well as the challenges we faced, in implementing the Programme of Action.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) marked an important shift in our approach by placing the individual at the centre of population and development policies. It also focused our attention on relevant issues, including economic growth and sustainable development, empowerment of women, urbanization, education and technology. In addition, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's reports (A/69/62 and A/69/122), significant gains have been made in population, health, life expectancy and the protection of human rights, and an estimated one billion people have been moved out of extreme poverty. However, much still remains to be done.

In my own region, the detailed analysis by the United Nations reveals that significant challenges still remain in the implementation of ICPD. And, while it is reassuring that the Programme of Action has been extended beyond 2014 and that that review process will inform and shape the post-2015 development agenda, many of the challenges require urgent attention if the progress and achievements since the Cairo summit are to be sustained.

The Secretary-General has aptly underscored the challenges of inequity and sustainability in his report, as follows:

“Our greatest shared challenge is that our very accomplishments, reflected in ever-greater human consumption and extraction of the Earth's resources, are increasingly inequitably distributed, threatening inclusive development, the environment and our common future.” (A/69/62, p. 2)

In that context, my Government is committed to ensuring that development is both inclusive and sustainable. Bhutan is committed to remaining carbon-neutral even as we strive to overcome multidimensional poverty and meet the special needs of the most vulnerable groups. The continued support and

cooperation of our development partners, particularly in building the necessary infrastructure and our productive capacities, will be crucial to our success.

Bhutan is experiencing rapid demographic change. With about 65 per cent of its population in the 25-and-under age group, the potential for a demographic dividend is at its peak. Access to quality education and vocational training that are responsive to the demands of our social and economic development process is therefore a key priority. The Government has been increasingly engaging the private sector to create the necessary jobs. Skills development, promotion of foreign direct investment and development of small and medium enterprises are part of our endeavours to enhance employment opportunities for the youth.

Rapid urbanization due to rural-urban migration has proved to be an increasingly complex challenge for Bhutan. With 60 per cent of our population still in rural areas, the pace of urbanization will inevitably intensify in the near future and outpace our current capacity to provide the necessary basic infrastructure and public services to urban residents. Ensuring access to land, housing, water, sanitary and waste management services and livelihood, particularly for the urban poor, are new dimensions to the development challenges that we face.

Gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women must continue to receive the highest priority if we are to realize the full potential of the ICPD. In that regard, Bhutan continues to promote women's rights and facilitate their full participation in the socioeconomic development and the political and decision-making processes. The current five-year plan — the eleventh — has placed high priority on gender-based monitoring and data generation, as well as interventions to promote gender equality in local governance. It will address visible gender gaps in the areas of education, employment, political representation and violence against women.

We also note and welcome the strong role that can be played by civil society in realizing the ICPD agenda, and we have taken concrete measures to encourage its participation. While we had just few civil society organizations in 1994, Bhutan now has 38 registered, consisting of 29 public benefit organizations and 9 mutual benefit organizations. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of all our development partners and the efforts of United Nations Population Fund and the Commission on Population and

Development towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bhutan remains resolute in its commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and to further incorporating all its aspects into our national planning process. We hope that our renewed political commitment to that Programme of Action will be backed by a strong commitment from our development partners to provide the financial and technical assistance that are necessary for the full achievement of its goals and objectives. My delegation looks forward to working to ensure that the ICPD Programme of Action remains a high priority in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomed the twenty-ninth special session to review progress towards implementing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda. We particularly thank you, Mr. President, for providing this occasion to ensure that those who lacked the opportunity to speak on the issue during the special session have the chance to air their views in the General Assembly.

The ICPD review acknowledges significant progress since 1994, but there is still much more to be done if the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action is to be realized, particularly for women, young people and marginalized groups. The ICPD commitments are the crucial foundation for a universally recognized, relevant and sustainable development agenda.

Globally, women remain subject to violence and harmful practices that negatively affect their health and their human rights. In New Zealand and in our Pacific neighbourhood we face high rates of violence against women and must ensure that all survivors of violence have immediate and safe access to critical services. We must also focus even more on reducing violence by involving men and boys in violence-prevention initiatives.

Worldwide, 220 million women still have unmet contraception needs. All women should be entitled to accurate information and counselling on a range of affordable, accessible and high-quality contraceptive methods. In New Zealand, new contraceptive technologies have resulted in significantly improved access. In 2010, for example, our Government increased access to long-acting reversible contraception by fully subsidizing contraceptive implants.

Despite progress, a key challenge still facing New Zealand is the persistence of ethnic disparities, with Māori and Pacific populations disproportionately affected by negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes. We must ensure that indigenous people receive appropriate services, and, importantly, we must address the social and economic factors that disadvantage indigenous people.

New Zealand is also focused on assisting the Pacific region to make progress under the ICPD. I therefore listened with great interest and support to the statements made a short time ago by Papua New Guinea and Fiji. That assistance includes supporting key multilateral organizations that work in the region, such as the United Nations Population Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

We endorse the findings of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review, and we believe the actions it identifies are vital to achieving inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable access to services, education and information. For those reasons, New Zealand remains firmly committed to working with Member States to ensure that the post-2015 agenda and the ICPD Beyond 2014 processes promote inclusive development. Above all, we will work to ensure that no one is left behind.

Ms. Stone (Australia): The issues covered by the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) are central to global efforts to achieve a peaceful, stable and prosperous world and are at the core of our human experience. While there has been some good progress in implementing the Programme of Action, it is an outrage that on the twentieth anniversary of the ICPD we are still struggling to ensure fundamental human rights for women and girls, to protect women and girls from discrimination and violence in all their forms, and to prevent early marriage and early pregnancy. Not only must we ensure those rights and protections, but we must address the reality that women and children are also bearing the brunt of increasingly violent conflict and protracted humanitarian crises around the world.

Women and children are receiving barbaric treatment at the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is systematically targeting women and children with rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence. Unmarried Iraqi girls and women have been forcibly transported to Syria either

to be given to ISIL fighters or sold as sex slaves, and there are reports that an office for the sale of abducted women has opened in Mosul city.

It is 178 days since 273 girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria. And we are seeing increasing rates of early and forced marriage as a response to displacement and insecurity, with reports that rates of child marriage have increased alarmingly in some Syrian refugee populations. We cannot collectively tolerate those actions, which are not only terrible acts, but also fundamentally undermine basic global norms and the rights of women and girls, which continue to be challenged and questioned in far too many situations around the world. That is not tolerable in the twenty-first century.

Given those alarming trends, the ICPD Programme of Action is as important today as it was 20 years ago. We must work together to advance the rights of women and girls, and not allow those rights to be eroded. That will take commitment and action.

Australia commits to protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls in all settings, including humanitarian and conflict situations. Women and children make up the vast majority of internally displaced and refugee populations. The loss of their homes, communities and social safety nets renders those women and children extraordinarily vulnerable. We will not let conflict or disasters become an excuse to weaken our resolve to empower and protect those women and children. In that spirit, Australia is providing a further \$2 million to the United Nations Population Fund to continue its work to protect women and girls in Iraq. We must not forget that women and children in perilous circumstances still have rights, and that those rights need to be protected.

Australia confirms its commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, to the Beijing Platform for Action and their subsequent reviews. And Australia is committed to ensure that gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights are firmly embedded in the post-2015 development agenda.

At the Asian and Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok, held in September last year, Australia and the majority of countries in our region supported a forward-looking declaration that upholds sexual and reproductive rights for all. That demonstrates that as a region we can continue to further the ICDP agenda, and

we can be even more ambitious in our aspirations under the Programme of Action.

Australia's commitment to women's economic empowerment and leadership and to protecting women from violence is a priority for us in Australia and internationally, through our diplomacy and our aid. Australia has set a benchmark for its aid programme, making the commitment that at least 80 per cent of all development activities must have a gender-equality focus. We are also prioritizing maternal and child health and family planning in our aid programme. Australia has a dedicated ambassador for women and girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, who engages internationally to shift attitudes about the role, value and contribution of women and girls. We urge others to appoint such ambassadors. That could form a powerful global network working for the rights of women and girls, including indigenous women and girls, everywhere.

While we face serious challenges, we can deliver on the promise of the ICPD Programme of Action if we continue to shine a light on these important issues and work together to deliver on our commitments.

Mr. Ferreira (Cabo Verde): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election, and to express the pleasure of the Government of the Republic of Cabo Verde in taking the floor in this follow-up to the Assembly's twenty-ninth special session.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62). The Government of Cabo Verde shares the report's conclusion that increasing individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across the multiple sectors of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is the foundation of sustainable development.

Cabo Verde has been putting human beings at the centre of its endeavours to implement the ICPD Programme of Action, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, access to sexual and reproductive health services, access to education, the reduction of maternal and child mortality, family planning and the protection of reproductive rights. Combating violence against women and women's empowerment have been among the highest priorities for our Government. In its annual report, just released, UNICEF indicates that

Cabo Verde is about to achieve Goal 4 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), on child and maternal mortality. I can inform the Assembly that Cabo Verde is in fact on the brink of meeting most of the MDGs.

The education of a young population and job creation continue to pose great challenges for the Government of Cabo Verde. However, as a consequence of our sound policies in that area, our reduced fertility rates and the ageing of the population have created new challenges in issues related to the phenomenon of immigration, which is already beginning to put pressure on our social and economic structures. The expertise and support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in that area is of the utmost important to my country.

Cabo Verde is fully committed to further implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. We are aware of and committed to the outcome of our regional review and the findings and recommendations of the ICPD Beyond 2014.

I will conclude by stressing that my country would like to count on the continued and strong support of the UNFPA in order to implement the 15 recommendations in the report on its review of Cabo Verde.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I am very pleased to be able to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and wish you every success. I would also like to thank you for convening this special and important meeting to follow up on the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the topic entitled "Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014" (A/69/62). We also thank the United Nations Population Fund and the regional commissions for facilitating the operational review in our States and regions.

Today we would like to stress that one of the most important challenges we are now facing is the eradication of poverty and our efforts to do that. Those efforts require coordination and cooperation at every level in dealing with the underlying causes of poverty and with the phenomenon of climate change, with which poverty eradication is now intertwined. Food security and unemployment are the most prominent issues to be dealt with.

We emphasize the importance of enhancing international cooperation and partnership everywhere, as well as coordinating activities aimed at formulating environmental policies to achieve equitable and sustainable economic growth and to mobilize the necessary financial resources. It is also necessary to study the relevant challenges, taking into consideration countries' varied levels of development and striving for a smooth transition to a post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, we would like to recall the 1994 ICPD, at which we adopted a Programme of Action based on human rights and the principles of sustainability. It aimed at enabling populations to exercise their right to participate in development through enhancing health-care services, better education and good governance, without discrimination on the basis of race, colour or religion.

The Sudan is now going through a phase of demographic transition, since according to the most recent census, taken in 2008, our population has now reached 30 million and is expected to double by the year 2035. That demographic reality requires us to establish national strategies to improve our demographic records, quality of life and well-being.

The secession of South Sudan in 2011 created a new economic, demographic and political reality in the Sudan, which requires that we come up with the support needed to update our demographic data through a new census and by conducting the comprehensive national surveys and intensive studies required for sound planning for development.

We have seen enormous changes in the issue of immigration, owing to the continuing flow of migrants both internally and externally. Because it borders on seven other States, the Sudan is considered a transit State, which makes the problem of human trafficking, especially of women and children, a major challenge. It requires concerted effort both nationally and regionally through cooperation among South-South countries, and internationally through partnership among departments managing migration. We must change the challenges into opportunities for development among the countries involved.

The Sudan has fulfilled its obligations in establishing peace, security, stability and development. However, we have continued to face genuine challenges owing to economic sanctions and the burden of foreign debt, which have adversely affected all aspects of our development and basic services.

In spite of all the restrictions facing the Sudan, it has achieved notable progress in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, especially with regard to the empowerment of women and gender equality. My Government has adopted numerous policies that serve as incentives to increase the political participation of women, especially in leadership roles and at the decision-making level. The Government of the Sudan has continued to spare no effort to reduce the threat of poverty through social security programmes, microfinance services and social protection networks aimed at supporting poor families, upgrading the standard of living and generating employment for young men. With regard to the reduction of maternal mortality, the Government has continued to improve the health of mothers and children through vaccination. The Government is sparing no effort to fight AIDS, malaria and chronic diseases, and it is also seeking to mainstream health insurance programmes and to offer free treatment for children under 5 years of age.

My delegation calls on the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide assistance, especially in conflict-affected States. The Sudan has participated in the review preparations and in all the reviews conducted at the regional level in the Arab and African contexts by virtue of its commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action after 2014 and to the post-2015 development agenda. We endorse the outcomes of the global and regional reviews regarding the fact that such programmes have not been completed and urge that they be completed through concerted efforts and the building of partnerships on all levels, especially since today the prospects for development are far better than they were in 1994. We are in desperate need of investment in programmes for youth and for the creation of further opportunities for young people to participate in building peace and promoting development for a better future.

The Secretary-General's report (A/69/122) stresses the importance of accountability and sound governance to guarantee the post-2014 implementation of the Programme of Action. It emphasizes the need to consolidate effective partnerships and cooperative relations that support national development strategies and include population dynamics. We should like to underscore the central role of the United Nations system in supporting and enhancing the efforts of States to implement the ICPD Programme of Action after 2014 and the post-2015 development agenda.

In conclusion, my delegation notes that the Sudan is now on the threshold of a critical new political phase thanks to the initiative launched by President Omer Hassan A. Al-Bashir on 27 January, which involves holding a comprehensive national dialogue to ensure that all political forces in the country participate in decision-making. The current dialogue is not about who governs the Sudan, but how to govern it in such a way as to achieve our desired development objectives and the necessary stability to be able to continue implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil takes this opportunity to welcome and express our deep appreciation for the supporting documentation by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's reports (A/69/62 and A/69/122) reveal that Member States have made considerable progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). We have significantly reduced poverty and improved access to and the quality of health and education services. Since the Cairo Conference, reproductive rights have been realized all over the world. And the outcome documents of the regional conferences have recognized that, from the perspective of population and development, evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education is one of the paths to progress.

In celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Cairo agenda, Brazil reiterates its full commitment and unwavering support to the United Nations initiatives aimed at promoting the goals of that Programme and confirms its subsequent commitments. Brazil has subscribed to the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, adopted by the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2013, which not only recognizes the importance of universal access to health and reproductive rights and gender equality, but also advances progressive commitments on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Montevideo Consensus took the lead in supporting comprehensive sexuality education and recognizing the right to safe and legal abortions, to access to emergency contraception and to recognition of unpaid work.

With a view to assessing the results of and improving the policies implemented in this area within the framework of the ICPD Programme of Action, in 2012 Brazil reactivated its National Commission on Population and Development. The Commission is made

up of representatives of ministries and civil society organizations, who contribute to the elaboration of integrated policies in such areas as the treatment of HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health. Our public policies with respect to sexual and reproductive rights are in line with the principles of the Cairo Programme of Action. In keeping with the concept of comprehensive care for women, Brazil is seeking to guarantee the right to free exercise of sexuality, reproductive planning and humanized prenatal, delivery and postpartum care, with a marked reduction in maternal mortality.

Brazil has covered a great deal of ground since the Cairo Conference. The percentage of the Brazilian population below the extreme poverty line is today just one third of what it was when the ICPD took place. The per capita income of Brazil's poorest 10 per cent increased almost four times faster than that of the richest 10 per cent, and that translated into an unprecedented decline in inequality within the country. Labour conditions have improved very substantially, and average unemployment on a yearly basis now hovers around the 5 per cent mark, one of the world's lowest — and this notwithstanding the economic and financial crisis of 2008, from which major economies are still recovering. Average labour income is now 60 per cent higher than it was 20 years ago. Life expectancy is almost 10 years longer, and the infant mortality rate is only one quarter of that in 1994. Today, under 1 per cent of Brazilian municipalities have a very low human development index, as against 85 per cent in the early 1990s.

Brazil has also made progress in adopting a legal framework that addresses the vulnerable segments of its society. In 2011, by a decision of the Supreme Court of Justice, Brazil recognized and ensured equal rights for same-sex unions.

Many challenges lie ahead. Levels of maternal mortality and unwanted adolescent pregnancy need to decline more rapidly. Rates for youth unemployment and dropping out of school early need to be further reduced. The country has persistent gender gaps and asymmetries domestically, socially and in the labour market, in both the public and the private sectors, as well as large and enduring racial differentials in opportunities and outcomes. That is where Government programmes such as the national programme for access to technical education and employment, Bolsa Familia and many others have been brought into play in order

to reverse the historical negative trend resulting from years of insufficient attention to marginalized and vulnerable groups, the needy and the less fortunate.

The world is still plagued with unacceptable levels of inequality, aggravated by many forms of discrimination. Progress in realizing fundamental human rights - such as sexual rights, comprehensive sexuality education, the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of colour, gender, age, civil status, gender identity and sexual orientation, respect for diversity and the full protection of the rights of all migrants - has been slow and fragmented. We are hopeful that a global consensus of the United Nations on a new vision for sustainable development based on the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", will bring the international community closer to cooperating effectively to overcome those critical hurdles.

The 17 goals and 169 targets adopted by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals provide an integrated platform for this new vision. They are a groundbreaking outcome that we wish to preserve as the main basis for integrating the sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, to be adopted a year from now.

We value the social and human rights dimensions of this new set of goals and targets, ranging from poverty eradication and combating inequality to universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services under a framework of economic growth, inclusiveness and sustainability. It is an agenda that seeks to be universal in nature while recognizing the common but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries.

We now need to concentrate on ensuring that the means of implementation are clearly identified and that they measure up to our high ambitions in terms of official development assistance commitments, policy space for developing countries, and national and international mobilization of resources and technology. We will have to focus on adequate and effective indicators, with assistance from the United Nations, the competent national entities of Member States and the relevant civil society groups.

Realizing rights entails promoting equality and equity within and among countries, securing respect for diversity, and improving education, working conditions and opportunities for all. Development also

requires worldwide synergy and global leadership from the United Nations. This is where we need to reaffirm unambiguously that the right to development is a fundamental, universal and inalienable human right.

If we are serious about population and development, and I believe we are, the foregoing are our main endeavours. In that spirit, I would like to reaffirm Brazil's full commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, to the key actions for its further implementation and to the findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia thanks you, Mr. President, for allowing us to show our commitment to the population and development agenda and its extension beyond 2014.

In 1994, we decided to implement the Cairo Programme of Action to guarantee to all persons a life lived without discrimination, in equitable conditions and free from poverty, and with full respect ensured for all rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. Our goal was the full implementation of the Programme of Action by 2014, and today we can count innumerable prime examples of progress for all our populations. In the case of Colombia, that agenda was fundamental for guiding public policies on the subject.

Colombia has made significant progress in combating poverty. More than 2.5 million people have emerged from poverty in the past four years. That figure does not correlate with income alone but reflects a multidimensional perspective that takes into account such variables as education, health and work. The multidimensional vision of poverty has allowed us to measure the true extent of the transformation in a person's quality of life and its sustainability over time. Furthermore, my country has a comprehensive human rights policy, which has a differential approach and covers children, youth and women, together with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, as well as indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, people with disabilities and older persons.

Among our achievements, I must point out today the progress made in reducing maternal and child mortality. In addition, I am pleased to note that we have made significant headway in preventing adolescent pregnancies.

The population and development agenda has allowed us to undertake concrete action to guarantee sexual and reproductive health for everyone, without

discrimination of any kind, as universal human rights. For that reason, in the framework of the sustainable development goals, we have advocated the inclusion of a goal along those lines. Synergy between the population and development agenda and the sustainable development goals is undeniable because they address multidimensional development and are people-centred.

At this session of the General Assembly, we will be called on to discuss the sustainable development goals. We cannot lose sight of the fact that those goals have the potential of transforming our States and the lives of the individuals and peoples in them. They are, undoubtedly, a set of tools with which to accomplish the goals set in Cairo in 1994.

Mr. Kydyrov (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate, which I hope will be fruitful.

Although the world has changed significantly in the last two decades, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), adopted in 1994, remains relevant. Furthermore, the strong interdependence of the issues of development, environment and human well-being outlined in the ICPD Programme provides the solid foundation for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda.

I would like to inform the General Assembly that, despite the complex political processes and economic difficulties in Kyrgyzstan, we have achieved good progress in our implementation of the Programme of Action. The new Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, adopted after the revolution of 2010, proclaims Kyrgyzstan as a socially oriented State. It should be noted that the European Commission for Democracy through Law, known as the "Venice Commission", commended the section of the Constitution that addresses human rights and freedoms.

To date, my country has ratified seven of the nine major United Nations international conventions on human rights. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan has subscribed to more than 40 international obligations and standards in the area of human rights, within the framework of the legal instruments of the United Nations, the main conventions of the International Labour Organization and the Helsinki Final Act.

Most of the international standards on human rights and basic freedoms have been incorporated into our national legislation. Kyrgyzstan has adopted

25 regulatory legal instruments to protect the legitimate rights and interests of children. Laws guaranteeing equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, together with social and legal protection from domestic violence, are the underpinnings of an equitable gender policy. To effectively regulate migration and demographic trends, we have adopted laws on such subjects as external migration, internal migration, international labour migration, refugees and preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, as well as many other legal instruments on social and health protection issues. Kyrgyzstan also attaches great importance to improving health care and fighting HIV/AIDS and preventing its impact on our socioeconomic development. It is necessary to note that child mortality has been substantially reduced in recent years, and we have achieved some progress in the area of reproductive health.

Kyrgyzstan has also succeeded in implementing the Programme of Action with regard to the empowerment of women and the improvement of their political and social status. The representation of women and youth at decision-making levels has significantly increased. In recent years, our women have held leadership positions, including as President, Chairperson of the Supreme Court, ministers and heads of other governmental institutions. Today, nearly a third of our Parliament members are women.

The new challenges in economic development have led to a growth in unemployment, which is a major factor in internal and external migration, especially on the part of the young population. The analysis of the country's demographic and labour situation shows that the trend of growing labour migration from Kyrgyzstan to foreign countries will continue, at least for the next five years. Although that tendency will lead to a reduction in the unemployment level, it will have a negative influence on demographic trends, labour power and the institution of the family.

Despite the progress achieved, there is still much to be done. Further empowerment of women, especially in rural areas, child protection, employment opportunities for young people and the improvement of social protection for the elderly and disabled, have become key objectives for the future we want. In order to reach those objectives, we have adopted a national sustainable development strategy for 2014-2017, which focuses on improvements in the effectiveness of health care and education, the protection of human rights and

freedoms, the role of the family, gender equality and social protection.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that Kyrgyzstan is strongly committed to strengthening international cooperation and effective partnership with the United Nations Population Fund and other United Nations agencies. That is the only real way to facilitate a full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): It is with great pleasure that I take the floor at this meeting dedicated to reviewing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014. I take this opportunity to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the attention he has given to the issue through the many events held, the reports published and the support provided to developing countries aimed at enabling them to benefit from the experience that has been gained in terms of population and development policies.

Since the adoption of the 1994 Cairo Programme of Action, significant progress has been made and has been reviewed in 1999, 2004 and 2009 and, finally, at the comprehensive review of the ICPD Programme of Action held in April 2014 at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development. My country, the Kingdom of Morocco, welcomes the many consultations and surveys carried out with the support of UNFPA, which have enabled us to assess the progress made and identify the challenges that continue to affect the achievement of the objectives set out by the Cairo Conference. Similarly, audits performed in 2013 during the regional conferences, in cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, allowed for an open and inclusive regional consultation on the subject of monitoring the Programme of Action beyond 2014 and the post-2015 development agenda.

Morocco has made progress in many areas, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health services. The rate of contraceptive use has increased significantly, and infant and maternal mortality have declined significantly over the past 20 years, from 76.1 infant deaths per 1,000 in 1991 to 30.5 per 1,000 in 2011, and from 332 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 112 deaths in 2010. The number of prenatal consultations and the proportion of assisted

births also increased significantly, reaching 77.1 per cent and 73.6 per cent, respectively, in 2011.

Moreover, in addition to its reproductive health strategy and national family planning programme, Morocco has implemented a health strategy aimed at meeting the specific needs of young people and adolescents, particularly in terms of information, education and clinical services for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, on the risks related to unsafe abortions and on the prevention and treatment of sexually transmissible diseases and gender-based violence.

In terms of strengthening democracy, Morocco has undertaken bold reforms at both the institutional and the legislative levels. They include the revision of the Constitution; the reform of the penal, election, family, nationality and labour codes; and the adoption of advanced regionalization measures. Alongside those reforms, the Kingdom has established institutions tasked with enforcing the rules of good governance, protecting rights and freedoms and strengthening participatory democracy.

That decisive progress towards realizing the vision of a society that ensures the effectiveness of rights and freedoms is enhanced by the Kingdom's efforts to harmonize national law and align its policies with internationally ratified conventions. We have also lifted our reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and adopted the Optional Protocol thereto, which is in line with that progress.

The results achieved in the 20 years since the Cairo Conference are encouraging but remain uneven across regions and countries and within countries. Those difficulties are compounded by new challenges in a constantly changing environment characterized by rapid globalization and changes in types of family organization, the emerging needs of youth, the ageing of the population, rapid urbanization in developing countries and growing disparities.

In addition, the mobilization of resources continues to be a concern. Of course, internal resource mobilization should be encouraged and diversified, but without an effective contribution by the donor community, it will be difficult to achieve the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action, which remain valid beyond 2014, as stressed in resolution 65/234, which was adopted in 2010.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco firmly supports the ICPD review process, which reaffirms the validity of the goals set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development for the period beyond 2014 and supports their inclusion in the post-2015 development programme.

Mr. Bristol (Nigeria): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for your excellent leadership of the General Assembly at this session and, more importantly, for providing us with the opportunity to share our perspectives on the important issues arising from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014 for human development and improvement.

As this debate is coming on the heels of the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014, which was held last month, Nigeria believes that a window of opportunity has once again been provided for Member States to exchange ideas on the best practices needed to transform the lives of the poor and the vulnerable. We are of the view that the global community must take advantage of the opportunity to shape the two key global development agendas: the ICPD Programme beyond 2014, and the post-2015 development agenda. Of particular importance is the need to engage an effective framework for reviewing existing population trends and related policies to capture all emerging development issues within the context of the two agendas.

Nigeria also reiterates that concerted efforts must be devoted to the assessment of the quantity and quality of investments made to improve the lives of the various components of the population, especially young people, women and girls, as well as the condition of the aged. In that regard, we affirm our commitment to the full implementation of the ICPD+20 agenda. We would, however, like to highlight that the agenda must include the following priority areas.

Quality investments in young people's education, health care, employment and inclusion are necessary ingredients for reaping the democratic dividend. Extreme poverty and hunger must be eradicated. The sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, young people and women must be improved, with a view especially to accelerating the promotion of family

planning practices. The rates for avoidable maternal deaths and those of infants and children under 5 must be reduced to single digit figures. Practices that protect women, girls and children, including those in conflicts and insecure situations, against violence must be prioritized. Policies that inhibit early marriage must be supported. Social security must be institutionalized, so as to provide support for the elderly, especially ageing women.

We have to properly situate population dynamics in the entire spectrum of our population and development programmes. We have to provide support to build capacity and invest more in technology, data collection, analysis, disaggregation, dissemination, communication and management strategies for the effective monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. We must prioritize programmes of action that promote the security of life and property and lasting internal stability. Finally, we must promote good governance, transparency and accountability.

Nigeria urges cooperation on the part of all stakeholders through unconditional partnerships and global leadership from the United Nations as the next phase unfolds.

Mr. Grima (Malta): Malta welcomes the holding of this meeting supplementing the special session celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its Programme of Action.

The International Conference, held in Cairo in 1994, presented a paradigm shift when the international community agreed that population was not just about people, but about making people count. Through the Programme of Action, States made a pledge to improve the lives of individuals by moving away from the focus on numbers and instead putting human rights at the heart of population and development issues. That approach ensured that realizing and protecting human rights would in turn contribute to the improvement of human lives and advance everyone's well-being.

The 1994 Conference Declaration and its Programme of Action is a point of reference to other processes and other key documents, such as the Beijing Platform for Action. As a matter of fact, the principles highlighted in Cairo were reconfirmed six years later when world leaders endorsed the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have been a central

part of the United Nations work over the past 14 years. With less than a year left, it is important that Member States continue their endeavours to fulfil the MDGs. The ensuing process will build upon their successes and seek to address the gaps. The post-2015 framework should accomplish the unfinished business of the MDGs.

Economic and social development continue to be an integral part of the Cairo legacy - they are its pillars - and, together with sustainable development, remain a dominant factor in today's development agenda. However, progress on the ICPD beyond 2014 agenda has to be universal and should address every part of society, thereby ensuring an all-inclusive society that leaves no one behind. It should also support other sectors, such as agriculture, energy, transport, environment, water and health.

Furthermore, any development agenda that aims at individual and collective well-being and sustainability has to guarantee dignity and human rights to all individuals. Malta believes that development and human rights are intrinsically interrelated, and, to that end, it considers a move towards a human rights-based approach to development cooperation as a positive development. Such an approach helps respect, protect and fulfil human rights universally.

The progress achieved in improving the livelihood of people since the adoption of the Programme of Action can easily be seen. Tangible results include the advancement of the status of women. Most societies now acknowledge and are working towards improving women's full participation in all sectors of society. For example, the ICPD helped us promote the importance of economically independent women and their role in decision-making, particularly political participation, as a means of enabling development and healthier societies.

Thanks to the ICPD, we have also seen an increase in the rate of education, which is also a means of promoting development and gender equality and of changing gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes. In the past 20 years, we have seen a decrease in extreme poverty. There have also been significant reductions in maternal deaths and improvements in skilled birth attendance. Having said that, we are still not there and more needs to be done.

The world is passing through difficult and challenging times. The prevalence of poverty, climate

change, diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS, the Ebola pandemic, terrorism, natural diseases, the trafficking of persons, particularly women and children, and illegal trafficking in arms and drugs are all proliferating the risks that our generation is facing and even at times threaten the very existence of our populations. Such crises and threats are marginalizing the Cairo Programme of Action and the MDGs, putting them beyond our reach unless a renewed effort is made by all to correct and turn the tide of those predicaments impeding the protection of our present and future generations.

We regret that the ICPD Programme of Action has of late been associated with and linked solely to reproductive rights. Although chapters VII and VIII represent important aspects of the ICPD, one must also appreciate and recognize the other chapters and the Programme of Action in its entirety. As it did in Cairo many years ago, Malta would like to once again reaffirm its position on reproductive rights and its long-standing position that no recommendation or commitment can in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health rights, services or commodities. Malta continues to hold the view that any discussion of rights and services relating to reproductive health cannot take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental human rights - the right to life.

Malta strongly believes that the right to life extends to the unborn child from the moment of conception, and that therefore the use of abortion as a means of resolving health or social problems is a denial of that right. It is within such a framework of human rights - the right to life - that Malta has for the past 20 years held the Cairo Declaration and the Programme of Action in high esteem. Malta will remain committed to implement the ICPD values and objectives in that spirit. The ICPD Programme of Action is a benchmark document that has served a guide for improving the lives and dignity of all people. The chapters are based on the notion that we all have to strive to improve human lives through the promotion and protection of human rights. Since 1994, a constant debate has centred on how to implement that belief.

As we move forward and the target date of the Millennium Development Goals approaches, the international community needs to renew its commitments and efforts to achieve the ICPD goals and commitments. It must also build on the ICPD

and work hard to reach a consensus on a post-2015 development agenda that responds to the opportunities and challenges of today's world.

We believe that the work on the framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 should be grounded in a critical evaluation of the success of the ICPD, the MDGs and subsequent relevant commitments. In the process, both successful areas and those needing improvement should be identified and guide our response to the current development challenges in a post-2015 framework.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting.

At the outset, I wish to express Eritrea's commitment to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The assessment of the status of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action undertaken at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development, last April, was the result of intense and lengthy intergovernmental negotiations. It covered several important matters that are essential to our core values with regard to moving forward the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014. In that regard, it is important that the development strategy should be country-led and take the specific conditions, needs and priorities of every State into account.

As many countries respond to the challenges of demographic changes, poverty, social inequalities, international migration, rapid urbanization and climate change, it is vital to integrate population dynamics into development planning at the national, regional and international levels. With regard to the linkages between the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 and the post-2015 development agenda and other intergovernmentally agreed goals, it is essential that the overarching goal should be to eradicate extreme poverty in all its manifestations.

To meet the commitments that we make and have made in various forums, cooperation, coordination and participation should be enhanced in an inclusive manner among all stakeholders. In the delivery of basic services, Eritrea has been emphasizing the participation of communities at the grass-roots level to promote self-reliance and reduce dependency. By mobilizing and motivating communities to be involved in the

design, development and utilization of development programmes, Eritrea has succeeded in meeting the health-related Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6. That significant achievement was announced in a side event, jointly organized with the United Nations country team, during the general debate at the current session.

However, in order to sustain its success, Eritrea recognized that more needs to be done, which includes consolidating and building on those gains, further empowering women and girls, improving access to strengthened reproductive and health-care services, intensifying efforts to end child marriages and female genital mutilation, continuing to build human capabilities, especially among the youth, and strengthening data collection analysis and dissemination.

Since the adoption of the ICPD in 1994, migration has become a growing feature of our globalizing world, bringing challenges and opportunities to the countries of origin, transit and destination. In that regard, the nexus between migration and development must be comprehensively addressed.

Let me conclude by thanking the United Nations Population Fund and its leadership for its cooperation in organizing a series of consultations and briefings, especially at the regional level, which allowed us to benefit from an open and frank discussions on a range of issues leading to the adoption of an African core position.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.