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General debate on national experience in population matters:

**“Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015
Development agenda”**

Statement submitted by Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

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

¹ [E/CN.9/2016/1](#).

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda and the review of methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development

On 25 September 2015 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the resolution — Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which aim to realise human rights and gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

The theme for this year's Commission on Population and Development (CPD) — strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda and the review of the methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development is timely.

The current additional mandates to take forward the vision of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all include:

(a) The General Assembly resolution 65/234 — Follow-up the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, which notes “ ... Decides to extend the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond 2014 and ensure its follow-up in order to fully meet its goals and objectives...”

(b) Paragraph 85 of the Agenda 2030 states “ ... Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals ... will be supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums... they will engage all relevant stakeholders and, where possible , feed into , and be aligned with the cycle of the HLPF”.

The realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not possible without critically addressing and strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda, and matters of population dynamics. It is pertinent that these aspects have to be integrated across all the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.

The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) is a regional women's organisation based in Malaysia, supporter of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, and working with partners in the Asia-Pacific region and regions of global South. Our region is a diverse region of inequalities and paradoxes. The region is home to more than 60 per cent of the global population with young people aged 15-24 years contributing to about 16 per cent of the population. Population ageing will have a profound effect on the region with the number of persons age 60 and above expected to increase by 66 per cent between 2015-2050 in Asia alone. It is thus pertinent that the demographic evidence base and population dynamics in general have to be looked at integrally in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in the region.

If our end goal is to create development for all for the next 15 years, it is important that we address critical concepts of equality, including gender equality, human rights, non-discrimination, fundamental freedoms and liberties for all,

especially women and young people. There needs to be genuine attempts to reduce inequalities between countries, between corporations and individuals, between the few rich and many poor, among men and women and transgender people and between those in the centre and the masses in the margins. The inequalities of poverty, lack of food security, violence against women and girls, early and forced marriages, lack of access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health information, services and modern contraception are real. Unless these marginalisations due to gender and sexuality, amidst a host of other politically difficult issues such as migration, religious fundamentalisms, ethnic conflicts, foreign occupations, taxation and debts are addressed, we will not be able to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Currently, there needs to be deeper analysis of existing demographic data and trend analysis and thematic analysis of the demographic data. This will enable Member States to address the root causes of developmental issues, and gaps in implementation. In addition, this will allow Member States to look at solutions to these issues in a holistic, sustained manner for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We call upon our governments, international organisations, including all United Nations entities to take the following actions in order to strengthen the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda by:

(a) Fully integrating the components of population dynamics and demographic evidence base within the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and targets, with special attention to the issues of young people and women;

(b) Fulfilling the right to universal access to a continuum of quality care and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, supplies and information, through all levels of healthcare and public provisioning, through the full implementation of SDG 3 and 5;

(c) Reviewing, amending and implementing the laws and policies to address the needs and realities of women, young people and marginalised people, and to uphold human rights and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place for the implementation of SDG 16;

(d) Recognising inequalities, including gender equality and social equity as central and integral to the realisation of the sustainable development agenda in full, and SDG 3 and 5 in particular;

(e) Unequivocally endorsing, sustaining and scaling up domestic resources and official development aid (ODA) for the implementation of comprehensive SRHR interventions; and the abolishing of global and regional trade and financial policies that perpetuate food insecurity, malnutrition and interlinked SRHR concerns through the full implementation of SDG 17;

(f) And finally meaningfully engaging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and progressive social movements from the global South as equal partners in development at all levels, particularly women-led and youth-led groups, in the methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development and HLPF mechanisms

We also call upon our governments, international organisations, including the United Nations agencies to take the following actions in strengthening the methods of work for the Commission on Population and Development by:

(a) Considering the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) agenda, as a vital developmental agenda involving health and population issues, which should not be mired in regressive language and policy-making;

(b) Ensuring the work of the Commission on Population and Development is integrated into the work of the HLPF, by reviewing national and regional reports (both from government and civil society) and enabling analysis;

(c) Ensuring the composition of the Commission on Population and Development is politically relevant in order to provide input into the HLPF mechanism by either expanding to include all Member States, or enabling the political standing of the current Commission at the required HLPF reporting periods.
