



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2019
Original: English

Commission on Population and Development

Fifty-second session

1–5 April 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda¹

General Debate 3

- (a) **Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels**
- (b) **Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Statement submitted by World Youth Alliance, 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.9/2019/1](#).

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The World Youth Alliance is a global coalition of young people dedicated to promoting the dignity of the human person in policy and culture and building solidarity between young people of developing and developed countries. WYA has over 200,000 individual members between the ages of 10 and 30 around the world.

The objective of the landmark agreement reached in Cairo was to raise the quality of life and to improve the wellbeing of human beings. It also sought to promote human development by recognizing the interrelationship between population and development policies and programs aiming to achieve poverty eradication, sustained economic growth through sustainable development, education, gender equality, maternal mortality reduction, healthcare, food security and resource development.

Authentic development is a process that takes place at all levels of society, creating a social, political, and economic environment that allows persons to reach their full physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional potential. All actions to implement the ICPD Programme of Action must all be person-centered and should focus on creating conditions that prioritize basic health care, education, good governance, the family, sustainable development, combating of disease, sustainability of environment and responsible stewardship.

Every human being has human dignity. It is the intrinsic worth of the human person that provides the basis on which to found policies and programs and their implementation into law under which human beings can flourish.

Development that is person-centered and grounded in human dignity focuses on empowering people. Policies based on human dignity recognize each person's ability to contribute to, not just benefit from, development. Human creativity and hard work have driven innovation, improving living conditions for countless people. When we invest in people, people will drive development themselves. Population policies should focus on empowering people, rather than promote particular family sizes or set population targets which may become coercive or create perverse incentives for service providers.

Good healthcare and quality education are key to achieving authentic development. They empower individuals, rather than governments, to make informed choices about their families. Good health requires not only medical care, but also clean water, sanitation, good nutrition, psychological wellbeing and the education necessary to comprehend medical advice and make informed decisions.

Human dignity must be at the foundation of healthcare. People need to be able to understand their bodies and their options in order to exercise informed consent. They should not be denied healthcare based on considerations such as race, class, or disability status. And all treatments and services must respect the values and dignity of all human beings. World Youth Alliance encourages Member States not to impose as healthcare products and procedures that fail to respect patients' consciences, or which violate human dignity. Practices such as abortion violate the dignity of mother and child and should not be promoted as a way to eradicate poverty. Respecting the ICPD consensus in paragraph 8.25 that this can only be legislated at the national level is essential and must be maintained at this Commission and in development aid agreements and policies.

We believe that education is a foundational element of development. The goal of education must be to help people recognize their dignity and equip them with the necessary tools to exercise their potential. When every member of a population is aware of how their education contributes to development, they will be able to fulfil

their responsibility in society. Quality education must be available to all on an equal basis and should flow from an authentic understanding of the human person, and foster respect for self and others in solidarity. The primary responsibility of education rests on the parents and it is the obligation of the State to support them in this role.

World Youth Alliance has developed a curriculum that can help promote respect, responsible behaviour, and equality. The Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC) teaches children about human dignity: that every human being has it and should therefore be respected. It also teaches children that, regardless of their circumstances, they have the potential to be excellent, to develop their gifts, and to use these gifts for the common good. The HDC is culturally sensitive and encourages parental involvement.

Young people who understand human dignity are not only prepared to make responsible personal decisions, but to contribute to their communities and to treat others with respect in their families, peer groups, and communities, including in their personal relationships. They will be prepared to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, not just for themselves, but for others.

Individuals, society, governments, and institutions need to work in solidarity to foster the conditions such as freedom, peace, and security that lead to development. It is not the density or composition of a population that determines the degree of development, but how a population uses its creativity to overcome obstacles to development.

Our natural environment is a source of both physical sustenance and immeasurable beauty to be cared for with wisdom and temperance. Meeting the basic needs of human beings for shelter, energy, water, sanitation and food in a timely manner is crucial to preventing and reversing much of the environmental degradation we see today; any environmental crisis is connected to a human crisis. Human creativity is the driver behind policies that will sustain the environment for future generations. New ideas about how to channel energy and develop “green” ways of doing business are produced by human beings, the very objects of sustainable development.

Recognizing that irresponsible actions can lead to environmental degradation, we must foster responsible stewardship in every society. Each human being is called to recognize his or her personal responsibility, which springs from the intrinsic value and inherent dignity of each human person. Responsible stewardship is the personal commitment to care for both earth and neighbour. Responsible stewardship begins in the family and extends to both local and global communities. We must empower people to be good stewards of our shared home in order to bring about sustainable development.

The work of the ICPD cannot be achieved without good governance. This is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 16, which highlights the importance of just societies and accountable institutions. Societies which are just and whose institutions are accountable are ones that ensure every person has access on an equal basis to the fundamental forms of capital, and therefore can participate in development efforts. This is essential to eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development for all.

Michael Fairbanks, an advisor to President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, has identified seven forms of capital that people need access to in order to live a good life. These are: natural endowments such as location, subsoil assets, forests, beaches, and climate; the financial resources of a nation, such as savings and international reserves; humanly made capital, such as buildings, bridges, roads, and telecommunications assets; institutional capital, such as legal protections of tangible and intangible property, efficient government departments, and firms that maximize

value to shareholders and compensate and train workers; knowledge resources, such as international patents, and university and think tank capacities; human capital, which represents skills, insights and capabilities; and culture capital, which means not only the explicit articulations of culture like music, language, and ritualistic tradition, but also attitudes and values that are linked to innovation. By ensuring that everyone has access to these forms of capital, we ensure sustainable development for everyone.

World Youth Alliance calls upon Member States to ensure that actions to further the implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development prioritize the dignity of the person and meet the fundamental needs of human beings at all levels to ensure human flourishing. We stand ready to work with you to achieve this.
