



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 Centre Africain de Recherche Industrielle, 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

[Original: French]

Contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

It has been 24 years since the International Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo, Egypt, on the theme “Interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development”. The Conference was attended by 197 Heads of State and Government who adopted a Programme of Action with 15 principles focusing on population, economic growth and development. The Programme of Action was intended to bring about a radical change in global thinking on population and development issues.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly, at its annual session, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets out 17 goals that Heads of State made a commitment to achieving over the next 15 years.

In terms of contribution, logically, from the time of conception and preparation to implementation, it would be the 2030 Agenda that would contribute to the Programme of Action, rather than the reverse, given that an assessment of the 24-year-old Programme of Action should lead to the creation of a replacement programme that corrects its weaknesses and failures and preserves and strengthens its progress and achievements. It is the recent programme (2030 Agenda) that contributes to the success of the previous one (the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development).

Our input takes this observation into account.

Following a careful reading of the two programmes, we note the following. The two programmes share the same purpose “to preserve the future of humanity”. Hence the call for the commitment of all countries to design and implement national development programmes that support the improvement of people’s living conditions.

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Programme of Action is much more focused on development in terms of population growth, as reflected in the text from chapter IV, entitled “Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women”, to chapter XI, “Population, Development and Education”, with subsections on the empowerment of women and girls; the role of the family; family composition; socioeconomic support to the family; fertility, mortality and birth rates; children and youth; indigenous people; persons with disabilities; family planning; sexually transmitted diseases; sexuality; women’s health and safe motherhood; HIV; population distribution, urbanization and internal migration; population growth in large urban agglomerations; international migration; refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons; education, population and sustainable development; and population information, education and communication.

Weaknesses

The Programme of Action did not place a great deal of emphasis on research and development. Chapter XII included some research activities that were not particularly significant, with sections on basic data collection, analysis and dissemination, reproductive health research, and social and economic research.

The implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development ensures human well-being and encourages population growth. The United Nations projections for this period have been confirmed. In 1994, the total population on the planet was 5.6 billion; in 2015, it was 7 billion; by 2050, it is highly likely to reach 11.9 billion, or even more at the current rate. The Sustainable Development Goals take a comprehensive view of the problems of life on the planet. They draw attention to resource depletion and environmental sustainability, as reflected in the following goals, which are supported by a global partnership aimed at their attainment: poverty eradication; sustainable agriculture; quality education; lifelong learning; access to energy, drinking water and sanitation; resilient infrastructure; safe and sustainable cities; sustainable production and consumption patterns; combating climate change; protecting the oceans and seas; and sustainable forests and biodiversity.

This is a major contribution of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is designed to transform the world by 2030, to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The growth in global population to 11.9 billion will have many harmful effects on nature, including food and housing crises, which in turn will lead to severe migration and land conflicts, among others; issues that the Sustainable Development Goals are aimed at addressing.

Weaknesses

The Sustainable Development Goals do not define (specify) the actions that should be taken to achieve each goal.

For example, they call for a reduction in poverty in all its forms but fail to specify how. Within the targets, it would be important to specify, for example, that poverty reduction requires job creation (giving work to the unemployed) by the State and the private sector; entrepreneurship being another way for the unemployed to find work. This is missing from the targets as presented.

We would like to congratulate the United Nations General Assembly and the experts who have taken a long-term view of the world's problems.

It is worth noting that neither of the programmes has addressed the measures to be taken to achieve the goals. Each country clearly has its own specific circumstances. Their contexts also differ, so actions may not be transferable. However, the documents should refer to existing measures that are general in scope.