



# General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

**23**rd plenary meeting  
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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Imnadze (Georgia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 13 (continued)

### 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)

**Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia): Significant progress has been made since the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was adopted in 1994 in Cairo. The thrust of the Programme is the well-being of individuals, underscored by the premises of protecting human rights, investing in health and education, advancing gender equality and empowering women. Twenty years on, the goals and objectives of the Programme remain valid. We have to take it upon ourselves to respond to the new challenges relevant to population and development, given the changing development environment.

Malaysia shares the view that the current state of the world's population is one of unprecedented diversity and change, reflected in new patterns of

fertility, mortality, migration, urbanization and aging. The continuation and consequences of those population trends will present both opportunities and challenges for the formulation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Since the adoption of the Programme, the Government of Malaysia, through the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, has developed and implemented its national plan of action. We are pleased to report that Malaysia has achieved most of the objectives and goals of the Programme. Furthermore, new policies and programmes are currently being implemented to respond to the changing socioeconomic conditions and emerging challenges for Malaysia's becoming a high-income developed nation by 2020.

Key enabling factors – such as our political stability, a harmonious social environment, unity and strength in diversity, an educated and trained workforce, abundant natural resources and effective partnerships with stakeholders and nongovernmental organizations – have contributed to our success in achieving the Programme and other development goals. That has also resulted in significant poverty reduction, more balanced economic participation and wider coverage of essential services, such as health care and education nationwide.

Poverty eradication programmes have been highly effective in reducing the prevalence of poverty from 8.7 per cent in 1994 to 1.7 per cent in 2012. During the same period, the rate of extreme poverty decreased from 2 per cent to 0.2 per cent. The reduction in the rate

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was due to inclusive poverty eradication initiatives, which were aimed at improving immediate welfare as well as providing income-earning opportunities to ensure sustainability.

The Government of Malaysia has given special attention to education for women. That is evident in the enrolment of women for first degrees in public universities, which has been consistently about 62 per cent of students for the period from 2009 to 2012. As for the current 2013-2014 academic year, 68.02 per cent of 41,573 new students in public universities are female. On women's participation rate in the workforce, the Government has set a target to increase the participation of women to 55 per cent by the year 2015. As a result of the programmes we have implemented, Malaysia is set to achieve the target, as the participation rate of women in the work force has increased from 46.8 per cent in 2010 to 52.4 per cent in 2013.

More than five years ago, the Government announced its intention to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in the public sector by at least 30 per cent. Now we are pleased to note that, following our proactive implementation of that policy, the percentage of decision-making positions in the public sector held by women has increased from 18.8 per cent in 2004 to 33.7 per cent in 2013. The same target was set in 2011 for the corporate sector. Though there is still room for improvement, there are encouraging signs of change. For a start, women's representation in the boards of directors of Government investment companies has increased from 9 per cent in December 2012 to 15.34 per cent in January 2014.

In Malaysia, the number of reported HIV cases has declined steadily. However, while the epidemic was initially dominated by transmission through drug users, there has been a rise in HIV cases attributed to heterosexual intercourse - a phenomenon prevalent among younger cohorts. In response, the Government has formulated a comprehensive National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2011-2015. The National Strategic Plan incorporates a multisectoral strategy that takes into account young people's vulnerability and provides free first-line treatment for all patients at Government hospitals and clinics and sexual and reproductive health education and services. It also encourages HIV testing through voluntary testing and counselling.

With regard to reproductive cancers, Malaysia was one of the first countries in Asia to introduce a

national human papillomavirus vaccination programme to prevent cervical cancer. Since its inception in 2010, a total of \$3.2 million has been allocated to implement the vaccination programme for school girls. To date, 672,970 school girls have benefitted from the programme.

Despite having achieved almost all ICPD objectives, we are constantly assessing the changing socioeconomic conditions, such as the decline in fertility and population ageing. Malaysia's overall fertility rate declined from 2.9 in 2000 to 2.2 in 2006 and to 2.1 in 2012. The decline in the fertility rate will have profound effects on the size and composition of the nation's population. Among its other effects, it will result in a significant age structural shift that may directly affect the future labour force. That being said, Malaysia recognizes the importance and the necessity of fostering a society of all ages. As Malaysia is expected to attain the ageing-nation status by 2030, the Government has formulated, approved and implemented a national policy and plan of action for older persons. The policy and plan of action considers both health and socioeconomic aspects with regard to older persons.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate the commitment announced by the Minister for Women, Family and Community Development of Malaysia at the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD. As we respond to the new challenges relating to population and development, Malaysia will continue to deliberate on and implement the goals of the Programme.

**Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines): The Philippines is very pleased to be able to take part in this meeting on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and to participate in the collective assessment of the status of implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, adopted 20 years ago. Our participation today reflects the Philippines renewed commitment towards the realization of the ICPD promise.

The Philippines wishes to share the following several points concerning the population and development situation in my country.

With regard to dignity and human rights, for the Philippines, reducing and eliminating poverty remains the core policy and programme framework of President Benigno Aquino's Administration in its pursuit of inclusive growth. Recognizing that social and economic

inequalities converge among the poor, the country is working very hard to using the fruits of economic gain to generate employment and sustainable livelihood and to provide basic services to around 4.2 million poor families.

The Philippines remains among the front-line States in championing the empowerment of women and ensuring gender equality. The economic and political status of Filipino women was lauded at the 2013 World Economic Forum as among the 10 highest in the world. Our national policy on gender and development allocates at least 5 per cent of the total budgets of all Government agencies for the implementation of gender-and-development-responsive interventions. The country likewise supports initiatives to eliminate discrimination against the most marginalized groups of women and girls, including those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on age, economic status, language, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity and other social categories.

The Philippines remains a champion in ensuring universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and upholding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all couples and individuals. The constitutionality of our Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 has been affirmed by our Supreme Court. And within the Universal Health Care framework, institutional capacities among Government and civil society organizations are being mobilized and enhanced to improve access to a wide range of family-planning information and services of the highest quality. The Philippines is likewise supportive of all initiatives to protect and uphold the rights of adolescents and youth to accurate information, comprehensive sexual education, and health services for their well-being and life-long health.

Regarding population movement and urban management, the Philippines has put in place appropriate policies to support people's right to move internally. Our policies provide equal opportunities and access to social protection, basic services, employment and the use of natural resources. We are also working to meet the need for housing and support infrastructures and to establish an effective database on the needs of migrants and local residents.

Our Government puts a premium on promoting and protecting the rights and well-being of our

10 million overseas Filipinos, who in 2013 contributed \$22.8 billion to our economy by way of remittances. It is often misunderstood that it is part of our policy to export Filipinos. That is not our policy. Our policy is to protect every Filipino, wherever he may be.

On population management, recognizing people as the most vital resource of the nation, the Philippines is making a rational and conscious effort to integrate population dynamics in all development initiatives, particularly in climate change adaptation, disaster-risk reduction and the formulation of management strategies.

In the 20 years of implementing our ICPD commitment, we do recognize that there remain significant challenges to address. We give special attention to the challenge of promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in the country.

We recommend that the issues and recommendations of the *ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report* and those set out in this statement be included in the post-2015 development agenda. We also express our full support for the ICPD Beyond 2014 monitoring framework as a basis for national and global reporting on progress that can enhance the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action by the General Assembly and its commission bodies, including the Commission on Population and Development.

Finally, we commend and support the Secretary-General for the index report (see A/69/122), the conclusions and recommendations of which must be carried forward to post-2015 discussions.

**Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom): It is a pleasure to be here today to reiterate the United Kingdom's full support for the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its subsequent reviews.

In 1994 the Cairo Conference produced an agreement that was a major landmark in recognizing the right of individuals to have control over their lives and that placed people at the centre of sustainable development. The United Kingdom is proud to have been a staunch supporter of the ICPD's goals and principles over the past 20 years, particularly recognizing the fundamental importance of gender equality and human rights, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as foundations for sustainable development.

This ICPD anniversary year and review process allows us to reflect on the important achievements made since 1994 in that regard, achievements that have enabled many millions of women and men to be empowered to make important personal decisions about their lives, including their sexual and reproductive health, without discrimination, coercion or violence.

However, the process has also highlighted how far we still have to go before we fully achieve the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action. Many millions of women and girls around the world are still unable to decide whether or not to have children and how many they have, and they are denied the ability to experience safe, healthy pregnancy and childbirth. Too many are denied the comprehensive sexuality education needed to make informed decisions about their bodies and their lives. Undermining the ability of women and girls to make those decisions diminishes not only an individual's full potential but also that of families in all their forms, communities and societies as a whole.

We know – and evidence from this review also underlines – that we cannot achieve sustainable development if discrimination and marginalization prevail and opportunities are denied to members of our society on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, race, age, disability or on any other basis. Non-discrimination and the right of individuals to lead a life free from violence should not be a distant aspiration but a reality in the year 2014.

Two critical barriers to women and girls' empowerment, recognized as such in the ICPD Programme of Action, are female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. In July, the United Kingdom was extremely proud to co-host the Girl Summit 2014 with UNICEF, to support and amplify efforts across the world to tackle the acts of violence against women and girls and to advance efforts to challenge social norms, customs and traditions that are contrary to the enjoyment of human rights for individuals at all ages. In our view, culture and tradition should never be invoked by Member States as a reason to deny their responsibility to promote and protect the human rights of their citizens.

Looking forward, we must similarly consider how we, as an international community, can continue to work together to achieve the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. We should remember, as Member States continue to elaborate the United Nations

development agenda beyond 2015, that we already have an important development agenda, crafted in 1994, and that 20 years later it has yet to be fully implemented in any region of the world. It is a universal agenda to which we must all recommit ourselves.

The *ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report* and the Secretary-General's index report (see A/69/122), presented during this important review year, are essential contributions to inform and guide our discussions on priorities beyond 2015. We would like to thank the United Nations Population Fund, the Population Division of the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the Secretary-General for their extensive work in completing those reports, and indeed throughout the year.

The regional outcomes of the review process, in our view, constitute a forward-looking agenda that, if embraced fully, can enable Member States to respond to the needs and aspirations of their people, including the enjoyment of their human rights and the improvement of their well-being and resilience, and to achieve true and lasting sustainable development. We call on the United Nations system to use the findings and recommendations of the review process as key references to strengthen the United Nations support to Member States at all levels in our collective push to craft a post-2015 development agenda that is transformative to people's lives and that leaves no one behind.

Let me conclude by reiterating the commitment of the United Kingdom to realizing the vision and promise of Cairo for all and our intention to continue to support the ICPD beyond 2014.

**Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy** (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to represent the Republic of Madagascar at this historic meeting devoted to the follow-up of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The five years of political crisis experienced by Madagascar has left the Malagasy people drained. Extreme poverty particularly affects women and young people in rural areas. The failure to integrate the concept of population into all development plans explains the situation, and has made a large majority of the Malgasy population vulnerable. In the implementation of the new general State policy, the Malgasy Government will spare no effort to conduct a general census of the

population and to integrate the population dimension into its future national development plan.

Madagascar is working to reanimate its institutional framework by using multidisciplinary studies dealing with the characteristics of poverty. Although immense challenges remain, the new Malagasy leaders and the people are showing their determination to redouble efforts by giving priority to the development of social sectors in the educational system and in professional training, health and nutrition, access to potable water, social protection, job creation and the preservation of the environment.

The country has already made significant achievements. Among them are the development of a legal framework to respond to the needs of the elderly and updated development policies in the health sector and for youth, as well as the use of data from surveys and anthropological studies of households, which allow more in-depth studies on poverty, nutritional status, the health situation of mothers and children, and women's empowerment.

Despite the difficulties, Madagascar has always adhered to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, and various meetings following that Programme, most recently the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development, held this April in New York.

The development of the country is on the right path. The Government's comprehensive policy, which has defined the vision of "Madagascar: a Modern and Prosperous State," sets out challenges and strategic directions regarding access to basic social services, including priority to maternal and child health and free primary education in public establishments. The national development plan being developed will put the individual in harmony with his environment and at the centre of concerns to ensure the coherence and sustainability of actions. The plan will also incorporate the main dimensions of development: population, gender, climate change and sustainable development.

Madagascar is facing huge challenges, but those challenges can be met. They include establishing an effective and harmonized social protection system, strengthening the vocational, social and economic reintegration of the population by reducing the informal sector, and improving the governance of public affairs.

On this occasion, I extend my profound thanks to all our partners who contributed to alleviating the suffering of the Malagasy people during the crisis. Today, the Malagasy people have decided to move towards inclusive and sustainable development. Ready and determined, they intend to overcome all obstacles. With that momentum, the Malagasy people count on the support and understanding of States represented here so that their aspirations to concrete and tangible results can be achieved.

**Mr. Tuy (Cambodia):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General for the successful convening of the twenty-ninth special session on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014 in order to assess the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action and to renew political support for the actions required for the full achievement of its goals and objectives. We also welcome the reports of the Secretary-General (A/69/62 and A/69/122). It is an honour for me to share the views of the Royal Government of Cambodia on the progress, challenges and comments on this item.

Cambodia has made considerable progress since affirming its commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, especially in the areas of maternal mortality reduction, fertility decline, gender equality and containment of the spread of HIV. Availing ourselves of this opportunity, we wish to confirm our resolve and will redouble our efforts to improve the lives of our people with equity and dignity in coming years and to ensure sustained economic growth and inclusive sustainable development.

We wish to thank the United Nations system, which through the leadership of the United Nations Population Fund worked closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia on a review process through a global survey and a series of consultations and reviews in the Asia and Pacific region. It also supported national consultations, including with civil society, to produce the framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014.

We endorse the operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, which was based on the use of data of the highest quality and analysis of the data. We also welcome the fact that the country-specific report of the Royal Government of Cambodia on the status of and progress

in the implementation of the Programme of Action is recognized as being consistent with resolution 65/234, on follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014.

In our country report, we have shown that Cambodia has made extensive progress in adopting and implementing national development policies and key sectoral strategies to achieve better development results, focusing on the following aspects. We have been strengthening human capital, guided by human rights standards and principles, and strengthening efforts to improve gender equality, equity and women's empowerment. We are addressing the issues of adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights. We are forging new partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and we are promoting the integration of population dynamics and population trends into development planning and policy-making.

After substantial declines in fertility and mortality, Cambodia is experiencing a phase of rapid demographic transition. The labour force is expanding with the entry of a large number of working-age youth. Backed up by appropriate policies in all sectors, that has a great potential to provide the country with a large demographic dividend through further economic development.

Recognizing the influence of population dynamics, reproductive health and gender on poverty, the Royal Government of Cambodia will further strive to improve the standard of living of its people. It will continue to reinforce the integration of the population and development agenda in a broad-based process of inclusive development through the implementation of the new five-year national strategic development plan. The plan is formulated to respond to new challenges pertaining to population and development and the changing development environment.

Despite the progress made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals, noticeable gaps still exist in the implementation of different areas of the Programme of Action. While recognizing the importance of protecting the present achievements of the ICPD, we also need to respond to new challenges relevant to population and development and to the changing development environment. We therefore reaffirm our commitment at the highest political level to achieving the goals and the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action.

A stronger partnership is needed to achieve those objectives. That is absolutely vital. We call upon Member States to recognize that implementation of the Programme of Action requires mobilization of adequate resources at the national and international levels. Countries need new, additional resources from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources. That is absolutely essential for the human resources development that is indispensable for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. It includes training, the exchange of experiences and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity development. Capacity development entails strengthening institutional capacity, including planning, management and monitoring capacities.

To sustain the momentum and gains made in 20 years of implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, the recommendations derived from the ICPD Beyond 2014 review should continue to be prominently featured in the United Nations Development Programme's Dialogues on Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and in whatever frameworks and instruments that may shape the new international development agenda. The Royal Government of Cambodia calls on Member States and civil society to spare no efforts in advocating for stronger and bolder political commitments to ensure that that is the case.

To support developing countries in their efforts to further implement the Programme of Action, it is highly critical that further strengthening of national capacity be given top priority in such a way that national Governments can genuinely assume ownership in its implementation. To enable developing countries to fully implement the Programme of Action beyond 2014, mobilization of resources from all possible sources and the effective use of financing are absolutely essential.

Last but not least, the Royal Government of Cambodia supports continuous and more effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the coming years. We welcome the outcome of the Assembly's twenty-ninth special session, on follow-up to the Programme of Action beyond 2014 and the post-2015 development agenda. We encourage all Member States not only to recognize the overall progress made so far in the Programme of Action, but also to endorse the need for its further implementation for the bright future of the next generations.

**Mr. Chinyonga (Zambia):** Zambia recalls with satisfaction the outcome of the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, on the follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014, including the commitments made by world leaders and the Assembly's decision to take note of the session's deliberations on the findings and recommendations of the *ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report*. We are pleased to have contributed to the global survey for the ICPD Beyond 2014 review, which highlighted the progress made and the challenges that still daunt the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

We reiterate our support for the views expressed in the context of the Africa regional review of the implementation of the ICPD Beyond 2014, where we joined in the adoption of the regional plan of action for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We also reiterate the importance of harnessing Africa's demographic dividends, given its youthful population. Zambia wishes to stress that the ICPD Beyond 2014 review has significant linkages to and implications for the review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action and for the post-2015 development agenda. We call for strengthening those outcomes through the integration of the findings and recommendations of the review.

As we highlighted during the special session, Zambia has a young population. The Government of Zambia, with support from various stakeholders, has therefore prioritized investments in the development needs of young people. Those include investments in higher education, where the Government of Zambia is making investments in the infrastructure of secondary and tertiary education in order to meet the higher education needs of its youthful population.

Secondly, the Government has integrated comprehensive sexuality education into the school curriculum in order ensure that people have access to age-appropriate information that will enable them make informed life choices and decisions.

The third priority is harnessing demographic dividends. The Government of Zambia is spearheading a national demographic-dividend study that will inform the attainment of economic gains resulting from bold and strategic investments in health, education and job creation.

The fourth priority is youth-friendly services. The country is continuing to invest in the needs of young people for sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights through the provision of youth-friendly information and services.

Fifthly, to end child, early and forced marriages, the Government is coordinating a multisectoral initiative to end child marriages, which remain prevalent, and is addressing sociocultural issues that drive the problem. A marriage bill is currently undergoing consultations. The bill addresses, among other things, formalizing the age of marriage at 18 under both customary and statutory law, and the consent of the two parties. All marriages, whether customary, civil and religious, will now be required to be registered upon meeting the stipulated criteria.

Sixthly, our national youth policy has been reviewed to incorporate new and emerging issues relating to young people.

The Government of Zambia has stressed that meaningful development cannot take place without addressing fundamental gender issues, particularly those of women's empowerment, that continue to constrain development. Addressing gender equality and women's empowerment is therefore central to Zambia's development agenda. Its revised national gender policy remains the principal tool for Government to advance the status of women. Gender inequality is exacerbated by sociocultural norms that prevent women from having equal access to education, health and labour market opportunities. Although the country has achieved gender parity in education, more remains to be done to ensure equal access in other areas of development, including higher education. In order to attain those objectives, legal and policy frameworks have been put in place.

Zambia recognizes that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are essential to allowing all people to achieve dignity and contribute to sustainable development through the realization of individual potential. The achievement of sexual and reproductive health and rights depends on strengthening health systems by expanding their reach and comprehensiveness. The Government remains committed to increase the national budgetary expenditure on health with a focus on women and children and to increase access to family planning

services. Zambia is making the following noteworthy investments in that regard.

First, Zambia is implementing commitments made at the London Summit on Family Planning in 2012, which include doubling the budgetary allocation to family planning commodities, striving to eliminate the unmet need for family planning, and improving universal coverage through an expanded method mix and increased access, particularly to the underserved population. Secondly, it is investing in the construction of 650 health posts in all districts in the country in order to bring health services closer to the people, especially in rural areas. Thirdly, it is implementing sector devolution.

Zambia reaffirms its commitment to the resolution of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development that called for the full implementation of the Programme of Action and key actions for its implementation beyond 2014. These include sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, population and development, education and gender equality and equity, and they are integrally linked to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development.

Zambia acknowledges the support rendered by our cooperating partners, including the United Nations Population Fund, in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In that regard, we wish to support the outcome of the special session in all United Nations organs, including in the Executive Board and the Commission on Population and Development, and to support countries in the further implementation of the ICPD agenda, taking into account the findings and recommendations of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review.

**Mr. Baaro** (Kiribati): Twenty years have passed since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. We can all agree that much has been done and achieved, as the recent *ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report* points out. However, the report notes that much more needs to be done. The inequitable distribution of the gains from the 1994 Programme of Action remains a key challenge, one compounded both by the ever-changing landscape of global development and by the ever-changing needs and demands of our societies and peoples.

All of the countries studied in the ICPD Beyond 2014 global review conveyed very clear and consistent messages. They included the urgent need to eradicate all

forms of inequalities, the importance of reflecting the demographics and dynamics of our populations in our development agenda and of recognizing that investing in our people – young, old, women and girls, men and boys – is of paramount importance. The underlying message conveyed at Cairo remains as valid today as it was 20 years ago. It is not about the numbers. It is about people. It is about you and me, our children and their children's children.

In 1994, our leaders were innovative and courageous enough to formulate and advocate the 1994 Cairo Programme of Action. Today, we need to ensure that we continue with what is just and what is right for our people – our people in the global sense – because what was important and what was reflected 20 years ago continues to be pertinent today. Our responsibility is not limited to the borders that define who we are as individual nations, but should also encompass who we are as global citizens of one global village.

Investing in our people means investing in our future to ensure that our children and their children live a life without prejudice, a life with the ability to make informed choices, a life where such choices are facilitated and supported by available services, a life without impediments keeping them from claiming what is rightfully their due, such as the basic necessities of life, and a life that they can call their own and that neither adversely impacts others nor is adversely impacted by others. Furthermore, investing in our people underlines the strong linkages between the need to preserve our environment for future generations and the paramount necessity to ensure that our one planet Earth is preserved so it can sustain the lives of future generations.

Two weeks ago, we concluded one of the most successful conferences convened by the Secretary-General on climate change. We applaud the leadership and the Secretary-General's very positive initiative. For those of us who live on the front line of the impacts of climate change, we welcome Member States' renewed focus and commitments in support of the Secretary-General's ambitious announcements and calls for action. The real challenge now is to translate those commitments and announcements into action on the ground.

At that same conference, we heard the moving voice of a very talented young woman, Kathy, a poet from our part of the world, from the Marshall Islands. Her voice conveyed the apprehension, the concern and the voice of



mothers from low-lying countries like ours, who lament what the future might well hold for their children and their children's children in the face of climate change. Surely, we members of this family of nations and the millions of mothers like Kathy around the world share, or should share, the same ultimate goal — to leave a better future to our children and grandchildren than the one we have inherited from our forefathers.

I am sure those present here also agree that we should emphasize the sustainable and inclusive development goals that are currently under development for the post-2015 development agenda. Our world today is as diverse as our world of yesterday; that diversity ranges from the different levels of development, economic growth, population demographics, physical and geographical realities to security challenges, just to name a few.

However, such diversity should not be a divisive factor on the path to a new global development and economic order. Diversity is the all-important reason why we need a new development framework. We have reached that stage in global development where we can no longer ignore the intricate linkages between our individual national development path and those of our neighbours and the world as a whole. To ignore such intricate linkages is to ignore our fellow global citizens who are, or will become, marginalized and who are, or will become, vulnerable through no fault or choice of their own.

As an example, the melting of the massive sheets of ice in the Arctic region owing to climate change will not only have a severe impact on life in that Arctic region, but will also result in the demise of future generations on the other side of the globe, in particular those living on the most vulnerable low-lying atoll island nations like mine, where we are currently are on the front line of climate change and the rise in sea levels. And while we may be on the front line now, when we fall, others will be on the front line, including the many, many millions of people who live in human settlements, communities, towns and cities in low-lying coastal areas around the globe.

Immediate and urgent global action is required now on climate change. Climate change is a survival issue. It is a security issue, a human rights issue and a human dignity issue. By acknowledging it as such, we will be advocating for the goal described in the *ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review Report*, namely, to ensure sustainable development by placing the human rights of

all people and individual well-being at the heart of the future development agenda.

The time to act is now. It is no longer about what caused climate change and who is responsible. It is about what we can do individually and collectively about it as good global citizens. The future of our people and the future of our world will depend on visionary and innovative leadership. We need a leadership that understands the barriers and acknowledges the challenges to the equitable distribution of gains. Most importantly, we need a leadership that takes the necessary steps to address such challenges and barriers to ensure that no one is worse off or left behind.

Today's discussion is very relevant to the discussions that took place a month ago in Samoa at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and two weeks ago during the Climate Change Summit here at Headquarters and the general debate that followed. The Millennium Development Goals have guided us to where we are now, and we certainly will support a post-2015 development framework that not only builds on the Millennium Development Goals, but that also reflects the challenges we face today, embracing the diversity of the world and channelling it into a sustainable and inclusive development agenda that leaves no one behind.

It is imperative that we act now and work hand in hand to achieve our ICPD Beyond 2014 goals. Strong leadership from the United Nations is very crucial, and I take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund for advocating a visionary and all-encompassing framework for actions that includes not just the unmet challenges of yesterday, but those of today and tomorrow, such as climate change, in the post-2015 development framework.

**Mr. Sareer** (Maldives): I am pleased to participate in the debate on agenda item 13 (b), which is closely related to improving the lives of our people and our global community of nations. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, and it is timely for us to take stock. As the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/122) notes, the most recent data and assessments confirm that the consensus we reached in Cairo in 1994 remains valid even today.

The Maldives is proud of its success during the past few decades. In the 1980s, the Maldives was

ranked among the world's 20 poorest nations. In 2011, we graduated from least-developed country status, the third country to do so. We have brought down maternal mortality rates from 500 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 13 per 100,000 live births in 2012, and infant mortality from 34 per 100,000 live births to 9 per 100,000 live births, respectively. We have consistently maintained a literacy rate of 98 per cent for the last 30 years. Under the 2008 Employment Act, we have guaranteed maternity leave for working mothers with three months' full pay, and we have always provided equal pay for equal work.

We have fully achieved five out of the eight Millennium Development Goals and we are on track for achieving the remaining three. While emerging issues are becoming more prominent, old challenges persist. As a small island developing State, climate change threatens to erode our development gains and makes progress on the topics addressed by the ICPD harder to achieve every step of the way. Equal income distribution has remained a constant challenge. While Maldivian women are among the most emancipated in South Asia, enjoying unhindered access to employment, education, health care and social mobility, they have limited opportunity for economic empowerment, and gender-based violence also remains a challenge. That is why our Government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy on violence against women.

The Government is in the process of enacting a gender equality law that will establish a legal framework for addressing all forms of discrimination against women. The Government has formulated a comprehensive national reproductive health strategy to ensure access to timely, adequate and quality reproductive health care. Furthermore, we believe that public awareness and education on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections need to be strengthened and healthy and responsible behaviours encouraged.

Meeting the needs of the youth of the country is a major priority of the Maldives Government. Children and youth account for 44 per cent of the population of the Maldives. Unemployment – especially youth unemployment, which gives rise to a wide-ranging set of challenges such as drug abuse and delinquency – is of grave concern for the public and the Government. Major projects, such as building a youth city, which is set to become a major hub of employment and innovation, have been announced, and practical work is under way for its realization.

Programmes that identify support and empower vulnerable groups have been formulated. Under an umbrella programme with a policy under which no child is left behind, high-risk children are provided with the necessary support and care in order to ensure that all children reach their full potential. The Maldives has a track record of formulating policies based on statistical evidence. Last month, we began a new national census, which will play a central role in helping us to understand the real and current picture of the national population, its strengths and other parameters. Setting a new precedent, collecting data and statistics on the migrant population will enable the Government to take further measures to protect and serve the interests of migrant workers, who, some estimates show, make up more than one third of the local population.

The Maldives believes that we should take into account the evidence and data available to us today in formulating the post-2015 development agenda. Sustainable development should consider the ecological limits of the planet in order to make sure that the population enjoys basic human rights and dignity and experiences socioeconomic well-being. In that regard, we call again for the inclusion of the report of the Secretary-General and the regional review outcomes in the discussion on the post-2015 development agenda.

In the Maldives, we strongly believe that a nation's most precious resource is its people. That is especially true for a country as small as the Maldives, which has limited natural assets. Without human development, sustainable development cannot be accomplished. We remain fully committed to the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We remain committed to our people, especially our youth and women, and to the full realization of their potential.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Auza (Holy See):** My delegation welcomed the convening 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 beyond 2014.

The Holy See is aware of the many challenges that the international community still faces in order to achieve the goal of greater, sustained economic and social development for all. Therefore, while noting that good progress has been made in the past 20 years in the reduction of the number of people living in extreme

poverty, the Holy See remains deeply concerned that 1.2 billion people — or 15 per cent of the world's population — still live in extreme poverty.

My delegation is convinced that the world's poor deserve and expect even greater results. We should refuse, therefore, to be satisfied with the current results and we must press forward to consolidate the gains and achieve even more to benefit those left behind. Lifting people out of extreme poverty is the best guarantee for them to enjoy their basic rights and dignity.

My delegation wishes to recall that the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) asked States to promote and strengthen the family as a vital element in the effort to produce greater social and economic development. Governments and the international community were called upon to devote greater attention to and manifest greater solidarity with poor families and those who have become victims of war, drought, famine, natural disasters, discrimination and violence of every sort. No effort should be spared to keep their members together, to reunite them in the event of separation and to ensure access to programmes designed to support and assist the vulnerable.

While individuals and peoples have been on the move since time immemorial, migration has become truly a phenomenon of our times. Yet, more often than not, policy-makers and large segments of society see migration only in a negative light. Negative stereotypes of migrants are used to promote policies detrimental to their rights and dignity. Moreover, migrants, especially children and women, are often victims of trafficking. Those issues demand our attention when tackling problems relating to population and development. There must be a way to stop that tragedy, and we must find it.

The ICPD recognizes that universal access to quality education is the most effective means for promoting sustainable economic, social and political development. It goes without saying that access to education for women and girls at all levels is at the heart of empowering women within society and of promoting equality between men and women.

Together with education, health is a pillar for real development. The health-care institutions of the Catholic Church throughout the world remain committed to ensuring the right to equal, effective and morally responsible health care for all. However, we also note that the role of the ICPD in the area

of maternal health is sometimes used to promote reproductive health rights that are detrimental to the unborn human life and the integral needs of women themselves. Efforts to address maternal mortality, obstetric fistula, child mortality, prenatal and antenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases and other health matters are sometimes hampered by policies that fail to take into account the right to life of the unborn.

Suggesting that reproductive health includes a right to abortion explicitly violates the language of the ICPD, often defies moral and legal standards within local communities, and divides efforts to address the real needs of mothers and children.

The Holy See is convinced that all efforts to respond to the integral needs of communities entail taking into account the social, cultural and spiritual needs of all and adhering to the international standard set by the ICPD, which calls for national laws to be fully respected.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/4 of 16 October 1992, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Organization for Migration.

**Ms. Muedin** (International Organization for Migration): One of the most significant contributions made by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was that it outlined, through its Programme of Action, the most comprehensive internationally agreed text on migration of its time. Chapters IX and X of the Programme of Action comprehensively address issues related to both internal and international migration. The Programme was in many ways a catalyst for the substantial global debates and action on migration that have transpired since.

While our collective appreciation of the links between migration and development has become more sophisticated and evidence-based since 1994, as was demonstrated at last year's High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, it is clear that the principles and objectives set forth in the Programme of Action regarding migration remain vitally relevant to today's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In the early 1990s, the number of international migrants was estimated to be 154 million. Today, that number is 232 million - a figure that is expected to grow well into the foreseeable future. Contemporary migration patterns are significantly more complex than in the 1990s, a function of both the sheer number of

migrants, coming from an increasingly large global pool, and the more diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds of migrants. Today, migration, both international and domestic, is one of the four major population dynamics that feature prominently in the discussions leading up to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda to be announced next year.

As the principal intergovernmental organization focused on migration globally, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) fully supports the report of the Commission on Population and Development (E/2014/25-E/CN.9/2014/7). The report acknowledges that migration has increased in volume, scope, complexity and impact since the adoption of the Programme of Action. It also acknowledges the important link between migration and development, and states that it is the responsibility of States to promote and protect the human rights of all migrants. IOM also supports its call on all States to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, and to address international migration through international, regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue.

The Programme of Action's objectives on migration take on new salience and urgency today and provide important lessons as we transition to the post-2015 development agenda. In that context, objectives such as ensuring migrants' social and economic integration, eliminating discriminatory practices and ensuring protection against racism, preventing migrant trafficking and exploitation, and providing adequate health, education and social services for migrants, refugees and internally displaced people are all important means for reaching a sustainable development goal target of facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration.

IOM is working with its partners, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development, the 18 partner agencies of the Global Migration Group and civil society representatives, to identify concrete indicators to help measure and monitor the development potential of migration and to ensure that the human and labour rights of migrants, displaced persons and refugees are fully realized. That will help ensure the universality of the new development agenda, as well as ensure that no one is left behind.

Migration is inevitable because of demographic, economic and environmental factors. Migration is necessary to meet labour demands and to ensure the availability of skills and the vibrancy of economies and societies. And migration is desirable for migrants and host populations alike, when governed humanely and fairly as a path to the realization of human potential. We hope that the ICPD's important contribution to that discourse will continue to stimulate dialogue and action on those issues in 2014 and beyond.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now give the floor to the observer of the League of Arab States.

**Mr. Al-Amri** (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to address the Assembly today, on behalf of the League of Arab States, on the occasion of this important special meeting on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. This meeting can make an important contribution to the political support necessary to achieving the objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and providing the necessary support to population and development issues.

We would like to emphasize the importance that the secretariat of the Arab League attaches to Arab population issues at all levels, as reflected in the national consultations and Committee meetings that we have held and in today's meeting. We have always been keen to participate in all activities held within the framework of the ICPD since its inception and the first five-year review.

In the light of the critical circumstances and major challenges facing the Arab region, it is crucial that we instil peace and eradicate violence in all its forms. We must spare no effort to overcome the obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. In that context, we commend the efforts of the Arab States to tackle population challenges and growth to advance education, health and living standards and legal protections for all individuals, as well as to promote women's rights and gender equality and to close social gaps so that all can enjoy full citizenship.

The League of Arab States has always sought to include development plans and population issues in discussions at all summits and ministerial meetings, as well as at the annual meetings of national committees

and councils on population, so as to allow for the sharing of experiences and partnerships in that regard. I must mention the high-level Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States, held in Cairo in 2013 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. It was a very critical juncture for establishing the priorities and for discussing challenges in all transparency through serious and constructive dialogue in that regard. The 2013 Cairo Declaration, issued at that Conference and endorsed by all Arab States, is the consolidated Arab document expressing our commitment to the achievement of the ICPD goals beyond 2014, the MDGs and the post-2015 sustainable development goals. That is why we requested that the Commission on Population and Development include the Cairo Declaration as an official document at its forty-seventh session.

The advancement of the Arab vision of population and development priorities is the building block for

our sustainable partnership, which should lead to the development of transparent and fair Arab population policies and plans. Here, we must refer to the partnership established between the League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund at the international, national and regional levels. The partnership aims to achieve population goals that run parallel to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and to follow up on all those achievements through the many meetings held since 1998.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for all the efforts made to achieve the agreed population and development goals, which represent our common endeavour.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker of the debate on this sub-item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 13.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*