



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 December 2015

Original: English

Commission on Population and Development

Forty-ninth session

11-15 April 2016

Item 4 of the provisional agenda¹

**General debate on national experience in population matters:
“Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015
Development agenda”**

Statement submitted by Fundacion para Estudio Investigacion de la Mujer, 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 to achieve sustainable development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a chance to advance towards the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and achieve it in the following 15 years. In Latin America and the Caribbean governments have committed themselves to implement the Montevideo Consensus, adopted in 2013. The demographic dynamics show an unprecedented growth in young people who face important challenges for achieving their incorporation in the labour market and overcoming poverty and inequality, something very necessary in our region as it is the most unequal.

Much has been said on the significance of the participation of adolescents and young people in policy-making that addresses them, but little has been done to guarantee their decision-making capacity in basic aspects such as their sexual and reproductive rights and health, their participation in the labour force and personal development. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a significant pending debt with adolescents and young people is the access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services.

In 2008 in Mexico, Ministers of Health and Education from Latin America and the Caribbean signed an agreement to make comprehensive sexuality education a reality. In many countries of the region there are laws committing governments to translate this into concrete actions. However, almost eight years have passed and little has been done to provide access to it. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda must emphasize and renew this commitment, not only in writing, but also to have this reach all children and adolescents without any type of discrimination.

Another reality of the region is the increase of adolescent pregnancies and motherhood, which occur more often at an earlier age. These girl-mothers are the result of the lack of sexuality education in schools and the lack of health services which do not provide them with information and deny them the access to contraceptive methods. Moreover, often, when these girls request the interruption of a pregnancy they could not avoid, they are condemned to go on and be blamed for something neither governments nor society could avoid, leaving them to their own fate.

In this way, the Fundación para Estudio Investigación de la Mujer recognizes the importance of these girls and adolescents to fully participate in society. The organization also recognizes that these girls should have the opportunity to develop their future because early motherhood compromises the continuity of their education and forces them to enter the labour force at an early age. This often leaves them taking underpaid jobs with scarce possibilities of promotion and personal advancement. Early motherhood will push them to remain poor.

We have to act now! We can no longer let girls and adolescents be sacrificed and denied the right to development. This is a human right and gender equality issue.

On behalf of millions of girls and adolescents we call for the commitment to sexuality education for life and well-being.