MYANMAR

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Statement by

His Excellency Dr. Myint Htwe,

Union Minister for Health and Sports

of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

at the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population Development

Priority Theme:

"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"

1 April 2019, New York

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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(1 April 2019, New York)

Honorable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honored to present the statement of Myanmar to this august gathering.
2. Myanmar has accorded strong and unreserved commitment on implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD since its inception in 1994. We are also very serious about it.
3. Myanmar's actions are also in alignment with the principles, goals and objectives of ICPD.
4. We reaffirm our commitment in view of the fact that implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD could favorably result in a whole range of beneficial impacts on the country. This is supported by findings of several implementation research studies being carried out in my country.
5. We, therefore, fully endorse the Secretary-General's report and uphold the notion *"that people are at the center of concern for sustainable development and are entitled to healthy and productive life in harmony with nature."* This particular notion is extremely important for all of us to consider with great attention.
6. Many determinants whether we will be having a productive and quality life or not depend to a significant extent on changing epidemiological conditions especially of various age related diseases, socioeconomic situation of the country and lifestyle patterns of the population.
7. For sustainable development, it is crucial that implementing the Programme of Action of ICPD should be considered from holistic perspective.

8. With reference to population and development, we adopted the first ever overarching policy **"Myanmar Reproductive Health Policy"** which is intricately and extensively linked with various aspects of population size, population dynamics, both internal and external migration and population integrity. These underpin the underlying principles of ICPD.

9. Myanmar accords sexual and reproductive health as one of the top priorities in our National Health Plan (2017-2021). The plan is an expression of our national development vision – a vision that is in resonance with the global sustainable development agenda.

10. Additionally, in the context of "rights", the **"National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy"** was drafted and is about to be launched in May of this year. It envisions that all persons living in Myanmar enjoy sexual and reproductive health and rights to the fullest extent.

11. However, our journey with a shared vision and value of ICPD has not yet ended. Concerted efforts from governments, national and international organizations, civil societies and all individuals by themselves are necessary to achieve productive life and to ascertain individual rights and choices on sexual and reproductive health including family planning.

12. In order to be more systematic and effective in following up the Programme of Action of ICPD, we are also developing renewed **National Strategic Plan** on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health, which will help guide the implementation of the program of action of ICPD.

13. Myanmar unequivocally recognizes that fulfilling the needs of sexual and reproductive health and rights of the people is crucial for achieving SDGs. Achieving SDGs is highly conducive to the country's social and economic development.

14. Mindful of this, the government health budget for activities to be carried out exclusively by the Ministry of Health and Sports has increased to 4.5% of the total government budget in the fiscal year 2018-2019. We plan to further increase the health budget commensurate with the country's overall socioeconomic development.

15. It does not need to be overemphasized the importance of proactive collaboration among the ministry of health, ministry of population and other relevant ministries and organizations.

16. Having had a good health domain is the foundation stone for **Population and Development.** Development cannot be complete unless health issues and challenges are taken into account.

17. Developing countries are facing mounting challenges in the domain of public health, which are deeply linked with population issues. These facts must be noted by all the responsible officials and every government.

18. Myanmar strongly calls for unwavering support from the international community as well as from UN agencies and like-minded organizations to accelerate implementation of ICPD Programme of Action in attaining SDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

19. We further acknowledge the importance of population dynamics and its interaction with socioeconomic complexities, political diversity and social challenges together with availability of complete and comprehensive coverage of population data for better planning of any development program in any country.

20. This is especially desirable in the case of Myanmar because we are experiencing rapid evolution in economic transition and social transformation.

21. In that context, for the first time in the last 30 years, Myanmar Population and Housing Census was successfully conducted in 2014. We highly appreciate the United Nations Population Fund and other development partners for their technical as well as financial assistance in this endeavor.

22. The disaggregated data and information emanating from the Census had been consistently referred to and utilized for formulating various National Policies and Strategies and Plan in the context of Programme of Action of ICPD, e.g., **"Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan for the year 2018-2030"**.

Mr. Chairman,

23. Let me bring to your notice that the population of young people (10-24 years of age) constitutes almost a third of the total population of my country. Having

had a good proportion of youth population is a great asset and potential for my country to realize demographic dividends and to achieve SDGs.

24. Investment in youth is also very critical for us so that we must improve quality and reach of the education for the young people, and also develop their skills to be in line with the realities and state-of-the-art developments in technology and labour market demands.

25. **"The National Youth Policy"** was also released last year in my country. The policy aims to improve overall youth development which would ultimately enhance progress of various sectors in my country.

26. The importance of quality and updated data cannot be overemphasized. The Government of Myanmar has embarked on a **National electronic Identification System (NeID),** which is a unique ID system for every single person in Myanmar for establishing a real-time digital data system for the entire population.

27. We need to increase the momentum of collaboration for furthering the Programme of Action of ICPD in the context of globalization, interdependence and multilateralism, spirit of helping each other among UN member states, in addressing population and development matters in an integrated and comprehensive manner. This would ensure sustainability of our achievements in a well-balanced manner.

28. In conclusion, *Mr. Chairman*, Myanmar feels that literacy level of the population in terms of health knowledge and healthy lifestyles, basic reproductive rights and population issues, basic notion of development *versus* population growth are key to successful implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD.

29. A sense of ownership by all those involved and especially the population at large are penultimate determinants to attain our common objectives of ICPD Programme of Action.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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