

52nd Commission on Population and Development

General debate

Agenda 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

3(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

INDIA STATEMENT

By

**Ms. Paulomi Tripathi
First Secretary**

3 April 2019

Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, my delegation congratulates you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assures you of our full cooperation in the deliberations of the Commission.
2. We would like to thank the Secretary General for his reports to the Commission and the keynote speakers for their presentations.
3. India aligns with the statement made on behalf of G77.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Population dynamics are both drivers and outcomes of sustainable development. Changes in population size, shifts in the age structure and spatial distribution of population require proactive responses in SDG implementation. The fact that implementation of ICPD Programme of Action has a direct implication on the realization of the SDGs, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

5. As we mark the 25th Anniversary of the ICPD, India remains firmly committed to the consensus in Cairo, interlinking diverse aspects of population, development and human rights. Recognition of the dynamic interlinkages between sustainable development and demographic dynamics, empowerment of women and human rights, has guided our development endeavours.

6. Enhanced family planning services, better health and education facilities for women have resulted in a rapid fall in the fertility rate and population growth rate in India. The TFR has experienced 50 per cent reduction, as it has fallen to current level of 2.3 from an average of 4.97 in 1975-80. The average annual exponential growth rate of population has fallen from 2.20% in 1971 to 1.64% in 2011. Substantial reduction in maternal and infant mortality have been achieved through incentivizing institutional child-birth, better new-born healthcare and family planning.

7. Every woman giving birth in public health institutions and the infants of upto one year of age, receive free and cashless services, which include free drugs, diagnostics, diet and transportation. All pregnant women are provided with free antenatal care in public healthcare facilities. Participation of volunteers from private sector healthcare providers in public facilities, has enabled extensive ante-natal coverage. So far, over 10 million checkups have been conducted in more than 13,000 facilities, with the help of 5,500 volunteers since June 2016 till now.

8. A cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women provides a wage compensation during childbirth and childcare, that also encourages good nutrition and feeding practices.

9. Rise in institutional child-birth has increased opportunity for the extending family planning services after birth. Extensive engagement of the community health workers in distributing contraceptives to beneficiaries have improved access. The aim is to ensure that 74% of the demand for modern contraceptives is satisfied by 2020.

Mr. Chairman,

10. India is among one the first countries to launch a comprehensive programme for its 250 million adolescent population, focusing on reproductive

and menstrual health management, nutrition, mental health and substance misuse. So far 7298 Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics have been established across the country and around 6 million adolescents availed services in a year under this programme.

11. Expanding healthcare facilities to address the challenges from demographic and epidemiological transitions is our priority. As a step towards providing Universal Health Coverage, India launched the world's largest public healthcare programme "National Health Protection Scheme", to provide comprehensive medical treatment to nearly 500 million people or more than 100 million families. Since the launch, more than 1 million patients have benefited from free treatment made available under the scheme which otherwise would have cost them \$450 million.

12. Through an intensified universal immunization programme, 32.8 million children and 8.4 million pregnant women have been covered the last three years and the number of vaccines under the programme have also increased from 7 to 12.

13. In education, our current focus is on improving quality, expansion of secondary and tertiary education and skills development for improved employability for the youth and closing gender gap. Foundations of 141 universities have been laid in the past four years. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (Save the Girl Child, Enable her Education) programme, addresses empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum through awareness generation and by promoting education for girls.

14. With an aim of promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among secondary school students in the country, India has launched the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) with total 5,441 'tinkering labs' in the country. Various government initiatives are being adopted to boost the growth of distance education, besides focusing on new education techniques, such as E-learning and M-learning.

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16. India has been strengthening global partnership for sustainable development through South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, India supports project to improve availability of data for tracking progress of the ICPD agenda in the framework of SDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Current and future demographic dynamics must continue to inform development planning. It is critical to identify areas where programmes must be scaled up to reach growing numbers of people in need, as well as areas where the shifting demographic profile offers opportunities to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

18. A synergistic approach to implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and 2030 Agenda provides a robust framework for action. In conclusion, let me reiterate our firm commitment to the ICPD agenda, in the context of review and implementation of SDGs.

I thank you.