

## **UNFPA Statement for the Closing Plenary Meeting- September 4, 2014 - SIDS**

Thank you ~~very~~ Mr. President  
Your Excellences  
Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, would like thank the government and people of Independent State of Samoa for their warm hospitality, and for the excellent organization of this important Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

More than 40 years ago, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was established as a trust fund; it was renamed United Nations Population Fund in 1987, though the acronym remained.

The three key areas of our focus are Reproductive Health, Gender Equality and Population and Development Strategies. These aspects are reflected in our mission which is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

Suffice to say, our work covers some of the most sensitive areas in development, from maternal and neo-natal health to ageing population concerns. Our mandate areas are inextricably linked to all development issues because without good health, an equitable society as well as reliable updated data, the basic tenets of development significantly erodes.

Population dynamics are at the heart of all development challenges of the 21st century and must be systematically integrated in national, regional and global development responses; it is imperative that people, particularly girls and women, are central to development efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when 179 world leaders signed the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action in Cairo, Egypt in 1994, all its 15 guiding principles addressed sustainable development-related issues that SIDS are grappling with today. Most importantly, the Cairo meeting marked the fundamental shift on how we view population and development dynamics to a human rights-based reasoning rather than focusing on numbers.

We continue to remind ourselves with a list of socio-economic challenges that leaders and the people of SIDS continue to deal with. Three years ago, the United Nations Population Fund conducted a global review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Progress

was noted and there are even some milestones that are considered best practice, but there is so much more to do. We cannot risk reversing these gains by being complacent.

Population dynamics has seen a predominance of youth populations in developing and less developed countries while persons over 60 years old are increasing globally by one per cent every year. UNFPA considers the significant youth population an opportunity. The full realization of the potential of this large youth cohort, and to be able to reap its benefits, will require genuinely, long-term investment in young people.

UNFPA remains the largest international public sector supplier of contraceptives and other reproductive health supplies as it strives towards universal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. In SIDS, the UNFPA provides commodities for reproductive health and family planning especially through the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security. In addition in humanitarian responses, UNFPA is leading efforts to ensure that the specific needs of women and girls are carefully considered.

Climate change has been the focus of this conference and rightly so: it is an urgent issue for all SIDS. There has been a lot of important new information on mitigation approaches to the impact of climate change. We would like to reiterate that if individuals need to be empowered to take advantage of these new approaches.

If the core of adaptation to climate change is a resilient, secure and empowered people then good reproductive health is a prerequisite - this is why we believe universal access to reproductive health is fundamental to sustainable development: it prevents early marriage and early pregnancy, ensures educational attainment, and help all people, particularly women and girls, achieve climate-resilient livelihoods and the flexibility to prepare for and act in advance of climate impacts. Critically, adaptation to climate change depends on the systematic collection, analysis and use of age, sex and spatially disaggregated population data, which provide essential information for climate-resilient planning and development.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that people should be in the centre of our responses, especially girls and women. Young people are key to the sustainability of any efforts today – involve them in policy development and national planning is essential and investing in them pays dividends.

I thank you for your attention.

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