

MALTA



**Statement by Mr. Bernard Charles Mifsud,
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations**

**Fourth Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
“Health and Population Dynamics”**

**Wednesday, 19th June 2013
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Co-Chairs,

My delegation shares the views expressed by the delegation of the European Union on the highly important aspect of health and sustainable development. We would however like to put forward some views from our national perspective.

Co-Chairs,

It cannot be denied that the provision of high-quality and comprehensive health-care services is an essential element for sustainable development. Health affects every aspect of development, including that of a sustainable economy and the general development of states. It is our firm view that a healthy population is key to each country's further development.

The Government of the Republic of Malta continues to ensure that full and comprehensive health-care services are provided to the entire population, without distinction of social status, capacity to pay, gender, sexual orientation or any other discriminating factor. Full medical health-care is provided on the basis of our social security system, making it accessible to all citizens of Malta, and is provided for free. No citizen is charged for any medical health-care service in any way under our public health system, from the most basic health medical assistance to the most complex cardiac medical interventions.

We are proud that despite our limited financial resources, we have provided and continue to support a public health system which was ranked as the fifth best in the world by the World Health Organisation.

Co-Chairs,

In 2010, the Government of the Republic of Malta adopted the National Sexual Health Policy, which gives a holistic assessment on sexual health matters. This policy identifies sexual health as "a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity."

Among other provisions, it provides for the continued provision to freely available modern contraceptive methods, allowing sexual partners to decide freely and without coercion the number, timing and spacing of children, as well as the necessity to have access to information about such

methods and all aspects of sexual health. This is fully in line with our obligations under the ICPD, which should be the guiding principle for all delegations in achieving progress in this important area.

Co-chairs,

We would like however, to clarify our position with regard to sexual and reproductive health and rights. While the Government remains fully committed to continue to provide, and improve upon, the current services offered to the entire population of Malta, we do underline, that any commitment undertaken in this process cannot in any way demand from any UN Member State the obligation to legalise abortion in any way, or to consider abortive medical practices as a method of family planning. Such medical practices remain illegal under the Laws of the Republic of Malta.

I thank you.