



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

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Statement

By H.E. Dr. Ahamd Jan Naeem

Deputy Minister of Public Health,

At

**29th Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the follow up to
the Program of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014**

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**Excellency, Mr. President,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,
Representatives of UN, Parliamentarians, Civil Society, ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, where in its 47th Session, it decided to convene this very important Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the follow up to the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We also congratulate UNFPA and all other UN bodies that have supported ICPD follow up sessions. My delegation also extends its full cooperation and support for meaningful discussion and substantive outcome of this session.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Afghanistan in cooperation with International Community, have made significant achievements in the different fields, including democracy during the past 12 years. We have had Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial elections. Participation of the people of Afghanistan during the recent Presidential elections was phenomenal. The Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan announced H.E. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, as President elect of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan yesterday.

Afghanistan has a new Constitution that is based on the principles of democracy, pluralism with recognition of human rights, including equal rights for women and men.

Afghanistan is pleased to have contributed to the global survey on ICPD beyond 2014 review and note that we have made considerable progress in implementing the ICPD Program of Action.

We therefore, take this opportunity to welcome the report of the Secretary-General, A/69/62 entitled “Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014” as well as the Index Report on the interactive debate of the 47th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.

However, we are aware of the challenges that still remain to improve the quality of life of all our people, ensure equality and equity and protect the environment for succeeding generations. We therefore share the urgency of the findings of the

review, which show that, despite significant gains in poverty reduction and economic growth since the ICPD, many have been left behind, lacking fulfillment of basic needs, meaningful work, access to social protection, or public services in health or education; and that there are still significant barriers for many people to enjoy their human rights.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan has been actively involved in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and regional and international conferences on the follow up of the ICPD Program of Action.

Afghanistan has developed the Reproductive Health Strategy 2012 to 2016 in line with the ICPD Program of Action. At the same time a Health and Human Rights Strategy has been developed. Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan has approved a patient charter and a guideline on Medical Ethics to ensure all patients receive health care service with dignity. We are on our way to establishing a Medical Council for the country.

Net Enrollment ratio in primary **education** was 54 per cent in 2003 and 77 per cent by 2012. The target for 2015 is 82 per cent. We are on track to achieve the target of 100 per cent by 2020, which is MDG target for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a State Party to most of the core International Treaties, Conventions, and Protocols on **human rights** and remains committed to promotion and protection of human rights gender equality and women empowerment.

In line with ICPD (PoA), the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan 2008 - 2017 has been developed. Women occupy one fourth of government jobs and their participation in decision-making has increased. Currently, 27 per cent of legislators in the Afghan Parliament are women. We are experiencing similar trends when it comes to law enforcement and judiciary.

Mr. President, a multi-sectorial National Youth Policy has been developed with special attention to youth participation, education, employment and health. A special attention has been focused on youth participation in peace, reconciliation, and in policy and program development. Sexual and reproductive health education is being provided, in accordance with national laws, to youth, albeit, in a limited manner in some parts of the country through Youth Health Line and Youth Information Centres.

Unfortunately, security is still a challenge, inter alia, causing internal migration from rural areas to urban centers. To address the situation, the government of Afghanistan is committed to improve living arrangements and household structures.

Afghanistan is still facing the great challenge of its **refugees**, mostly living in the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Iran. We are thankful to them for their hospitality. We also believe on dignity and voluntary return of Afghan refugees. Therefore, having peace and creating conditions for sustainable development in Afghanistan provides a durable solution to issues of refugees and overall development in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has unprecedented, achievements in the fields of freedom of speech and access to media. We have more than 40 private TV channels and more than 100 radio stations, besides, the printed media. We believe through these developments we can have strong and vibrant civil society and citizens' voices, which are not only important but also integral part of democracy.

Excellencies, distinguished Delegates

Allow me to conclude my statement by stating that the Special Session of the General Assembly is a great success and a contribution to efforts in the international arena for realization of the International Human Rights for the world population. But the notion of respect to different cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are also important for our greater success. Therefore, it is important for all of us to work together, for a better human life, while respecting the views and beliefs of each other.

Afghanistan is committed to implementation of the ICPD Program of Action in collaboration and cooperation of families, communities' national, regional and international stakeholders. We will do these while respecting religion and national laws to achieve sustainable development and realize the human rights of all Afghans.

My delegation believes that we will have fruitful outcome of the Special Session with consensus of all the member states.

Thank you!