

Statement of Denmark by

H.E. Mr. Mogens Jensen  
Minister for Trade and Development



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**ICPD**

**Statement by the Minister for Trade and Development of  
Denmark at the Special Session of the GA on the ICPD**

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Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

Today we mark a landmark event: The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action. And let me start by saying: I may be a politician. But today is not firstly about politics. Today is about humanity. Gender equality and equal rights - the right of every human being to enjoy a life free of discrimination and with equal opportunities - is a basic human right. It's also a cornerstone in Danish development cooperation and at the top of my agenda as minister.

Today is about Diana – a young girl I met at a health clinic in Ghana.

Diana had performed seven abortions on herself – seven! – because she had no access to prevention and information. Now, she had – miraculously – given birth to a healthy pair of twins. Today is about Farima and

Mariama – the two women I met in the village of Congola in Mali. They had just recently become aware of their democratic rights and from then things had moved quickly – and Farima was now running for mayor in the village! Today is also about the gay, lesbian and transgender youth who are afraid for their safety and health – but with heads held high and such great hopes for the future.

One of the best ways to lift people out of poverty and to promote human rights is by contributing to gender equality. Ensuring that girls who are already in school are followed by many others and that they make it – not just to primary school but to secondary and longer-term education. That women can exercise their right to participate fully in decision making at all levels and gain access to resources and skills that will enable them to take control over their lives and contribute to society. So you see, ladies and gentlemen, here we move from humanity and to plain and simple common sense. Why leave half a population out?

The normative development and implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action has greatly improved the lives of many - through its insistence that equality and respect, promotion and protection of human rights are at the heart of sustainable development. However, we have learned from the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process that we still have a long way to go. Denmark is committed to do so! We owe this to the many women, girls and young people who are still left behind.

Denmark welcomes the findings and recommendations of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process. Human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights for all are preconditions for ending extreme poverty and ensuring sustainable development. The holistic approach put forward by

the ICPD Programme of Action is key in this regard. The Index report highlights some of the most pressing challenges that remain.

As the world sees the largest ever generation of young people, it is imperative that we secure their sexual and reproductive health and rights through youth-friendly services regardless of marital status and through the removal of barriers. Especially adolescent girls face challenges in lacking access to education, unwanted pregnancies, maternal death and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage. I applaud that the Index Report finds that

Governments from all regions of the world hold universal access to comprehensive, quality and integrated sexual and reproductive health to be one of the highest priorities for the global development agenda beyond 2014. Moreover, it is considered essential to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Alongside access to modern methods of contraception and safe abortion and post-abortion care, comprehensive sexuality education will go a long way toward addressing unplanned pregnancies and the deaths that are way too often the deeply tragic result.

Denmark will continue to strongly support the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the integration of its key objectives into the Post-2015 development framework. If the post-2015 development framework is to be effective and provide lasting results, it must be based

on the international human rights framework and its central principles of participation, non-discrimination, inclusion and accountability. This also means upholding anti-discrimination measures that address intersecting forms of discrimination, including those based on age, sex, economic status, language, ethnicity, disability, migration status, sexual orientation, gender identity and other social categories included in the Index Report.

The Post-2015 framework must give priority to the core goals of gender equality, empowerment of women, investment in young people, inclusive economic growth and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. It must ensure that women and men, throughout their lifetime, are able to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives and have the means to do so. Failing to deliver on the promise of the ICPD is not just failing to fulfil fundamental human rights; it is also poor economics and a step back in our common fight for sustainable development.

Thank you.