



ITALY

**TWENTY-NINTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON “FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(ICPD)**

STATEMENT BY

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Mr./Madame President, Mr. Secretary-General, Executive Director of UNFPA, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's Special Session marks the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Italy was among the 179 Member States to participate, forging the commitments to take action for a truly transformative agenda. The Conference adopted by consensus a Programme of Action indicating a long-term set of universal goals, linking population dynamics, global health, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development.

Progress made in the past two decades are very well illustrated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/62) entitled, "Framework of Actions for the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014" as well as in the Index Report on the interactive debate of the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development: Italy welcomes both documents, with their analytical approach focusing on individual dignity, human rights and equality. The ICPD Programme of Action highlighted the relationship between gender inequality and poverty, poor health, poor educational attainment and sustainable economic development. It recognized that women and young people are often less able to access their human rights and less likely to gain from the benefits of economic development, acknowledging that Countries were to focus more on the needs of women and young people.

Italy is pleased to have contributed to the survey for the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Review, which shows much considerable progress in the implementation of the Conference Programme of Action: for example, the number of those living in extreme poverty in developing countries fell from 47% to 22%, which means about 1 billion people now see improved living conditions; a considerable decline in mortality rates was recorded in most countries; a legal minimum age for marriage at or above 18 years has been adopted in 158 countries; a greater number of countries has committed to improving the protection of human rights of migrants, leveraging the benefits of migration for global development.

Despite these relevant gains in poverty reduction and economic growth, more collective and individual efforts are required to address the remaining challenges to combat poverty, to ensure equality and equity and to protect the environment for future generations. The findings of the Review show a world with an uneven growth, both in earnings and wealth, where many people still experience significant barriers in fully enjoying their human rights.

These issues require our special attention so that we may define appropriate policies and allocate the necessary human and financial resources. Of particular relevance is the goal to ensure that the largest generation ever of adolescents and youths receive a proper education as well as care for their specific health needs. Similarly, ageing people are an emerging reality, with social and economic implications that need adequate responses. The empowerment of women and girls and gender equality remain unfulfilled, and gender-based violence is still wide spread.

The impact of population dynamics occurs at different levels and contexts. Therefore a sound response requires the integration of demographic dynamics into development planning at the national, regional and international levels. Governments can be more effective in planning their national strategies when they have access to comprehensive and

reliable statistics and trend analyses. But findings in the reports show that the capacity to collect, monitor and project population dynamics continues to be weak. We need to reinforce international action to ensure a more effective and efficient collection and analysis of population data.

Italy believes that strategic responses to population development challenges require systematic, coordinated and active contributions of all relevant stakeholders (governments, civil society, academic institutions, private sector and international organizations). In this context, the United Nations, and UNFPA in particular, can play a leadership role in forging stronger partnerships.

The future Development Agenda will bring renewed attention to social, economic and environment sustainability: we call for the inclusion of the findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report and the regional review outcomes in the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Italy reaffirms the relevance of the principles of the 1994 Cairo Conference for the Development Agenda and its support for an acceleration of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014, as well as for the vision presented in the report of the Secretary-General. We are of the view, that these principles and documents represent a sound framework within which to fully respond to the needs and challenges of a projected world population growth of 8.4 billion by 2030, so that all individuals and all Countries will have the opportunity to realize their full potential.