



LUXEMBOURG

Statement by H.E. Mr. Jean Asselborn,
Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

Twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly

**Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference
on Population and Development beyond 2014**

New York, 22 September 2014



Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies, Gentlemen,

The Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo 20 years ago and the resulting Programme of Action represented a fundamental step forward in the area of development. Subjects that were sensitive but essential to ensuring sustainable development finally found their rightful place on the international agenda.

I would like to underline that Luxembourg respects and implements the principles and recommendations of the ICPD plan of action in both its domestic policies and its policies on cooperation in the areas of development and humanitarian action.

Unfortunately, it should be noted that twenty years after the Conference took place in Cairo, we are still far from achieving the objectives that we set for ourselves. I commend the report of the Secretary-General on the operational review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action that clearly explains why those principles remain important beyond 2014. In that regard, I wish to confirm that Luxembourg supports the inclusion of the recommendations and conclusions of that operational review in the post-2015 development agenda, which should be founded on the principles of human rights, dignity and equality for all.

Sustainable development will not be possible without taking into account the effects of populations; health, including sexual and reproductive health; education; population movements and urbanization, as well as good governance and mutual responsibility. The eradication of poverty remains the fundamental objective of all joint development efforts, but it should be equitable and universal, aimed at everyone, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, as well as rural and urban groups.

Autonomy for women and gender equality represent a vital pillar that should be strengthened. Unfortunately, 20 years after the ICPD, women and girls continue to suffer widespread discrimination, rights violations, unequal opportunities and violence. It is high time to bring an end to these issues and ensure that each woman and each girl is able to exercise her fundamental rights, including her sexual and reproductive rights, and that each woman and each girl has access to equal opportunities and can live her life free from all forms of violence. Gender equality is a cross-cutting priority in Luxembourgish cooperation and is respected in all its programmes and projects. We also support a large number of specific projects, such as projects to combat gender-based violence, particularly the elimination of female genital mutilation and autonomy for women in the world of employment and microfinance.

Young people are the future of our planet and, especially in southern regions,

represent almost 30 per cent of the total population. It is essential to ensure that each young person has access to quality primary and secondary education and to support their transition to the world of employment, which should be governed by social protection policies and programmes. Particular emphasis should again be placed on girls and young women, given that they are often at a disadvantage in terms of access to education and employment.

Discrimination and marginalization occur in many forms, for example on grounds of a person's sexual orientation or identification, physical or mental disability, culture or origin, or HIV status. The world we desire post-2015 is a world free from all stigmatization and discrimination, where each person is equal and able to exercise their fundamental rights.

We have made very significant progress in the area of health, but, again, that progress has been unequal. Communicable diseases, as well as maternal and perinatal conditions and nutritional deficiencies, remain the main causes of death in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. Strengthening full and efficient health-care systems is essential to that end, as well as the elimination of economic and social barriers, and barriers to services, to provide universal health care coverage.

The objectives relating to sexual and reproductive have seen little progress, especially in southern regions. In line with the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD Programme of Action, we should continue to work towards universal and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care without discrimination or stigmatization. Each individual, man, woman, or young person, should be able to benefit from that right and from services suited to that end, including quality sex education. It is necessary to ensure that national health systems and policies include sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning services and the provision of suitable contraception; the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; maternal, neonatal and infant health and sex education.

Luxembourg supports these principles not only in its cooperation with United Nations agencies such as UNFPA, UNAIDS and WHO, but also in its bilateral programmes with its partner countries and in cooperation with NGOs. This year, the bodies responsible for Luxembourgish cooperation published a new sectoral strategy on health, in which all areas of sexual and reproductive health take a central place and are one of the pillars of universal health care coverage. The strategy promotes universal and equitable access for all persons to the quality health care and services that they require, with adequate social protection systems. Interventions in this area are aimed at all groups and often focus on women and girls, as well as vulnerable groups. They are based on respect for each person's individual rights, dignity and non-discrimination. The strategy also emphasizes the important position that should

be occupied by health, especially sexual and reproductive health, in the post-2015 development agenda.

Matters relating to mobility and space are likely to be of increasing importance. The growth in the global population, sociological changes that will bring about climate change and the increasing scarcity of natural resources, together with the serious political crises currently affecting the planet, will all contribute to making management of this issue a key element of the success or failure of our future strategies, including as part of reflections on the post-2015 agenda.

Bringing urbanization under control by applying sustainable development solutions, promoting resilience and finding a balance between migration surges and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants are some of the main challenges that the United Nations should include on its agenda so as to discuss a framework suited to the needs of a 21st century whose main characteristic seems to be perpetual movement. Controlling these flows is a requirement for the success of the globalization of our exchanges at all levels.

Political leadership and national ownership are essential in achieving the sustainable development objectives that we are in the process of defining. We will only get there together, with the international community and national governments taking on mutual responsibility. The post-2015 development agenda should be inclusive and participative, based on respect for human rights, non-discrimination, equity and dignity for all. In that way, the conclusions and recommendations of the operational review of the ICPD Programme of Action will find their place.

Today, I reconfirm the continued political and financial commitment of the Government of Luxembourg to the comprehensive implementation of the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development and its integration post-2015.

Thank you for your attention.