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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

By

**H.E. Dr. Kesetebirhan Admasu , Minister of
Health of the Federal Democratic Republic of
Ethiopia**

At

**The Special Session of the International
Conference on Population and
Development/ICPD/**

September 22, 2014.

New York

Mr. President,

I am very pleased to be here today to attend this Special Session on the follow-up to the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014.

Mr. President,

Over the past 20 years, Ethiopia has made important strides in setting up equitable basic services to reach out to the most vulnerable; they have been empowered with access to new opportunities. We have done our best to address all forms of discrimination; and protect the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable. We now have the opportunity to ensure that pursuant to the recommendations of the 47th Session of CPD the essential and critical features of the challenges we face in connection with population are reflected in the post 2015 development agenda.

This will have to take in account that despite our achievements, the challenges are still enormous and the stake is indeed high. Persistent gender inequality continues to hamper women's access to reproductive health care services. And many harmful traditional practices continue to pose serious challenges, making it difficult to ensure the well being of women and girls. We must remain committed in our common resolve to further reduce significantly and eventually eliminate these harmful practices.

One of the other messages that came out strong from the Commission's last deliberation is that ICPD is still unfinished agenda and despite our achievements, progress has been uneven and much more still needs to be done. And no doubt, we are afforded with an incredible opportunity to continue with

our efforts of addressing population related challenges. I am confident that in the process of crafting the post 2015 development agenda, Member States take these concerns into consideration.

Mr. President,

We in Ethiopia have done reasonably well in implementing the critical issues articulated in the ICPD. Our National Population Policy was issued in 1993 with the aim of harmonizing the rate of population growth with the capacity of the country for the development and rational utilization of natural resources with the ultimate goal of raising the level of welfare of the population over time.

Subsequently, we have issued well-aligned relevant sector policies, strategies and programs with the Population Policy. Furthermore, laws (both family law and criminal code) have been amended to address the reproductive rights of women, men and young people in general.

Our road to ensuring full access and full choice to reproductive health including family planning, an essential part of ensuring the health and well-being of all our people, has been long and arduous. We have worked hard to address lack of information through social marketing and community-awareness activities. Through implementation of innovative strategies, Ethiopia has improved uptake of family planning services from 3% in 1990 to more than 40% in 2014. This is a truly remarkable progress and testament to our commitment.

The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), Ethiopia's five-year National Development Plan which is currently in its final year of implementation has given due emphasis for integrating population issues in the overall and sectoral plans.

On gender equity, equality and women's advancement, Ethiopia has also undertaken measures including developing policies, plan of action and development packages as well as establishing the necessary infrastructures for its implementation. Mainstreaming gender issues into sectoral and overall national development plans and the budget process of the country, and strengthening gender-disaggregated data to inform policy and programs have been important areas addressed. The wide gender gap that used to have prevailed in primary education has been narrowed through providing equal access to boys and girls and taking timely and necessary actions to address those factors which hinder the girl child from attending school. The Revised Family Law and the Criminal Law have become instrumental in preventing harmful traditional practices and promote gender equality and reproductive rights. But we need to do more and we have the commitment to continue along this promoting trajectory.

Mr. President,

To be successful, we must take bold action, and never shy away from difficult challenges. We will do so because it's a cause worth fighting for. It is in this spirit that we shall proceed in Ethiopia with confidence that international cooperation in this area will continue to be strengthened in order to implement the priorities we set and register successful outcomes in the upcoming ICPD implementation period.. Let me conclude by expressing our appreciation to all development partners and the private sector who have always been ready to work with us in close partnership.

I thank you.