



BELGIUM

**Statement by
H. E., M. Jean-Pascal Labille
Minister for Development Cooperation
Kingdom of Belgium**

**at the Special Session of
the General Assembly
of the United Nations on the Follow-up to the
Programme of Action of the International
Conference on Population and Development
(ICPD Beyond 2014)**

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Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *International Conference on Population and Development*, Belgium wishes to reiterate its strong support for the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the full operational review, the results of which are included in the index report presented today.

Belgium strongly supports the continuation of the Programme of Action beyond 2014, taking into account the challenges that remain. We are particularly concerned about the three following issues:

Firstly, the continuing inequalities in the achievement of results; we need an inclusive approach which encompasses all individuals without discrimination. Secondly, the many gaps where young people are concerned. Investments targeting young people, including good quality education and sexual education, are the most effective investments we can make.

Finally, the inadequate progress in terms of rights and of sexual and reproductive health. The maternal mortality rate due to early pregnancies and morbidity remains high, especially among very young women.

Over the past 20 years, we have made considerable progress. Belgium hopes that the positive results obtained so far will encourage continued efforts.

In April 2014, Belgium was chosen to chair the 48th session of the Commission on Population and Development. Sustainable development, which is part of the theme of this session, depends on successful follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. My country emphasizes the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action in furthering human rights as well as for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

I am very pleased to note positions taken earlier by the African Union on several issues, such as the African Common Position on the Post-2015 Agenda, and the declaration from the Abuja+12 Summit on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Africa.

Finally, considering the links between population dynamics, environment and sustainable development, it is essential that population dynamics is better factored into development planning, taking into account the challenge of population growth.

We are delighted to work with governments, the United Nations system and civil society towards achieving the promising goals of ICPD Beyond 2014, for all women, men, boys and girls.

Thank you for your attention.