

# Statement by Foreign Minister of Estonia, Mr. Urmas Paet at the UN General Assembly Special Session on ICPD Beyond 2014

22.09.2014

*Check against delivery!*

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo 20 years ago marked an important milestone in promoting and protecting human rights of all persons. The ICPD agenda significantly changed the way we approach the interrelationship between population, human rights, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Much has been accomplished and lives improved through the implementation of ICPD agenda since 1994, as well as the Millennium Development Goals. ICPD Agenda has been a solid basis for various programmes and joint projects aiming at empowering women and girls, fighting sexual crimes and protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights as part of human rights. However, many people continue to live in a context of inequality and without the full realization of their human rights. Still too many women and young people – in particular adolescent girls, - especially in marginalized communities, are being left

out of the ICPD promise. The goals of sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls; gender equality, empowerment of women and equal access to education for girls still appear elusive.

Protecting human rights, investing into health and education, advancing gender equality and empowering women are the only way to expand opportunities for all. We must acknowledge that we cannot achieve sustainable development without achieving those goals first.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia is actively promoting women's rights, gender equality and education and we attach great importance to women and girls' empowerment, inclusion of women in conflict prevention and sexual and reproductive health.

Since 2010 Estonia has funded several projects and international activities aiming at promoting gender equality and women and girls empowerment, fight against sexual violence, including UNSCR 1325 related projects by over 1.65 million euros. During last the 3 years the amount of allocated money has increased by at least 10-15% annually. This year Estonia has funded several development aid projects that focus on educational aspects of women and girls. In coming years two Estonian NGOs will carry out the projects in Afghanistan to raise the quality of health care education. In Yemen we have started a programme that aims to decrease the child marriages of girls from illiterate families. In Kyrgyzstan Estonian NGO works on raising the knowledge about reproductive health. These are few examples how we concentrate on the implementation of ICPD Agenda.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The principles and objectives of the ICPD agenda should be cornerstones of an effective Post-2015 Development Agenda in order to address the urgent challenges of poverty eradication, human rights and sustainable development for all. By committing ourselves we will be able to meet them. Let us continuously work on the targets set 20 years ago in Cairo.