

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations
New York

Statement
by the Permanent Delegation
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations

during the

29th Special Session of the General Assembly
on the Follow-up to the Beyond 2014 Action Plan
Issued by the International Conference on
Population and Development (ICPD)

Participants are kindly requested to refer to this text during the statement's delivery.

New York, 22 September, 2014

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

First, allow me to congratulate you on presiding over the current session of the General Assembly, as well as over this special session, which presents a valuable opportunity to review the progress which has been achieved on the national and international levels in connection with population issues, empowerment and development, and to renew our commitments to the action plan issued by the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 (ICPD Beyond 2014). This special session may be viewed as an auspicious beginning and an incentive to act on the main topic of the General Assembly's current session—a topic which you yourself proposed—revolving around the achievement of sustainable development and the drafting of an ambitious development agenda for the post-2015 period. Moreover, my country's delegation lends its voice to the statement issued by the esteemed delegate from Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman, esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

The ICPD action plan sets forth ambitious guiding principles which point to sound ways of demonstrating concern for population issues, with special attention to the requirements of women, children, young people, the elderly, and those with special needs. The full implementation of these principles necessarily requires that all of us act to combat the scourge of poverty as the first and most important of all challenges. We are called upon to flesh out our commitment to the eradication of poverty and to include population issues in the post-2015 development agenda.

However, despite the progress made to date toward achieving the aims of the ICPD action plan, a number of obstacles continue to prevent us from reaching the desired levels of implementation. The most prominent of these obstacles are:

- 1) Failure to keep commitments relating to international partnerships for development; a failure on the part of developed nations to support developing nations' national plans; as well as a newly emerging phenomenon whereby certain donor nations tie the aid they provide to developing countries to the fulfillment of conditions determined primarily by political considerations.
- 2) Some states' interference in other states' internal and private affairs, and attempts to impose their own ways of life and social customs on the societies of other nations. In this content, allow me to reemphasize the importance of respecting the basic principle, affirmed in the ICPD programme of action document, of full respect for each nation's sovereignty and distinctiveness, and for its social, cultural and moral values.
- 3) Some nations' violation of the provisions of the UN charter and UN resolutions through the unilateral imposition of illegitimate economic measures against developing nations. Such measures have had a grave impact on the economies of the countries concerned while depriving entire communities of their right to development and to a decent standard of living.

- 4) Ongoing foreign occupations, which do more than anything else to prevent the peoples of the world languishing under such occupation from enjoying freedom, dignity and development; as well as the spread of international terrorism with its religious and ideological exclusivism, its violation of human rights, and its destruction of people's cultural, civilizational and development-related accomplishments.

Mr Chairman, esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Over the past two decades, Syria has made significant strides within the framework of its commitment to the principles and aims of the ICPD action plan. It has done so by taking steps to support projects and programmes whose aim is to achieve human, economic, and social development. Such projects and programmes have yielded significant results toward achievement of the millennium development goals, particularly in the areas of education and health. However, over the course of the last three years, Syria has been the target of a tidal wave of organized terrorism supported by a number of UN member states. With its sick, exclusivist ideology and ideas, this terrorism has: undermined Syria's achievements; drained its society of its wealth and resources; caused a decline in its development levels; robbed the Syrian people of their security, well-being and ambitions; driven thousands of Syrians from their homes, spread chaos; destroyed public and private property; instilled unwholesome attitudes in young people, attitudes based on rejection of the Other, labeling others as infidels without good cause, and the pursuit of "martyrdom"; recruited child soldiers; and dehumanized women by promoting the view of them as sex objects; not to mention taking them captive and raping them.

In the face of these exceptional circumstances, the Syrian government has worked to strengthen the capacities of the ministries and other bodies concerned with social, family, health and educational affairs in order to preserve the accomplishments Syrian society had made prior to the outbreak of the current crisis. It has placed special emphasis on health, education, gender equality, and the provision of welfare services to all segments of society. It has initiated a number of funds and programmes which provide humanitarian assistance for those affected by the crisis; it has also allocated additional budgets to generate job opportunities for men and women, to provide women's health care services in the form of mobile clinics for pregnant women, in addition to pursuing rural and urban development, supporting communities hosting displaced people; creating national reconstruction programmes and helping the displaced return to their homes. The Syrian government has made decisions and taken measures to protect families and their individual members, particularly young people and teenagers, and to provide care and support for mothers, young children, and those wounded in terrorist attacks, especially girls, the elderly, people with special needs, and victims of human trafficking. The Syrian government has worked closely with its national and international partners to carry out these projects and achieve their aims. In this connection, we would like to point out that due to insufficient funding by the United Nations programmes operating in Syria, most of the burden for financing such plans, services, and projects has fallen on the shoulders of the Syrian government itself.

Mr Chairman, esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Syria stands in the direst need of urgent, balanced, unbiased international support to end the suffering of the Syrian people, to meet their needs, and to restore Syria's former level of development and stability and the security for which the Syrian people long. These aims can be achieved by supporting Syria's government and people in their war against terrorism, and by supporting Syria's national development programmes without strings attached and without regard for political considerations, and by acting immediately to abolish all of the unilateral coercive economic measures which some nations have taken against Syria in violation of international law.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, we would like to remind the UN member nations of their moral, legal and human responsibility to support the causes and rights of people languishing under foreign occupation, particularly their right to be liberated from occupation, and their right to development and a decent standard of living.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.