



These new generations of young people are active participants in society and making significant contributions to development. Today young people worldwide are better educated and face lower risks of early death than they did three decades ago. They hold the promise of a better future for themselves, their families and communities. However, notwithstanding these positive developments, the challenges and adverse environment that most of today's youth face are enormous and multifarious requiring concerted global attention for action.

Too many young people in the developing world still do not have adequate access to quality education, decent work opportunities or participation at decision-making levels. Many of them also lack information and access to family planning and reproductive health services, all of which compromise the ability of young people to realize their full potential.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994 underscores the importance of promoting the well-being and opportunities of young people, including through their access to reproductive health education, information and care.

Recognizing the continued importance of the goals and objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action and the reality that those are yet to be fully achieved, last year the General Assembly decided to extend the Programme of Action along with the Key Actions for its further implementation beyond 2014.

In so doing, the General Assembly also decided to convene a special session during its 69<sup>th</sup> session, twenty years after Cairo, to assess the status of implementation of the 1994 Programme of Action, and to renew the political support for the full achievement of its goals and objectives. Adolescents and youth will figure prominently in this assessment and plans for the further implementation of the Programme of Action.

**Distinguished delegates,**

The focus of this session of the Commission on adolescents and youth reinforces the call to action from the high-level meeting on youth held last year. Governments and the international community must address in pragmatic, effective and forward-looking ways the challenges that limit the ability and opportunity of today's young to further their own development and that of the communities where they live.

Given the reality of the increasingly globalised nature of our world, young people of today need our support to develop their capacity as true world citizens to face the challenges of this interdependent planet. In this context, the positive contributions that young people are making in raising awareness and in identifying areas of practical actions towards more sustainable development need our attention and encouragement on the road to Rio+20 and thereafter. Rio+20 should serve to remind us that population dynamics are one of the key factors of medium and long-term sustainability.

I am encouraged to find that here in this very room we can see young people who are interested and active participants in effecting change. At the same time, we should not forget that there are

hundreds of millions of youth whom we cannot see but who are also engaged in tackling even greater and all encompassing challenges of life on a daily basis. They deserve our attention too.

I urge this Commission and its members to deliberate on these issues of real concern and to exercise leadership in furthering the rights and opportunities of adolescents and youth so that they reach their full potential and are empowered to create a better world for all of us.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman

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