

High-Level Task Force for the ICPD

Celebrating Cairo & Going Beyond

Side event 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development

Welcoming Speech by President Joaquim Chissano

Co-Chair of the High-Level Task Force

New York, 8 April 2014

Your Excellencies, partners and friends,

Welcome to our event on *Celebrating Cairo and Going Beyond*, on behalf of President Tarja Halonen, my co-chair, myself and the entire High-Level Task Force for the ICPD. And a special welcome to all our speakers today, including Ms. Navi Pillay, who we are honoured to have with us.

We all gather here at this year's Commission on Population and Development for the same reason: we want to end poverty, we want to end inequalities, and we want to lift up all communities and countries through inclusive, sustainable development.

We want a world where *everyone* can enjoy their human rights and freedoms, where nobody is left behind.

The good news is that the groundwork for this was set 20 years ago with the adoption of the landmark Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development. Today, we celebrate its vision and all the benefits it has brought to the quality of life of so many people, families and countries around the world.

But we all know that much remains to be done. By the end of today, 800 women and adolescent girls will die from pregnancy-related causes. In the next 24 hours, over 2,500 young people will acquire HIV. And by tomorrow, 39,000 thousand girls under 18 will have been forced into marriage.

If we had all lived up to our Cairo commitments, these scenarios would be very different. We would be saving and improving many more lives, and would be on a certain path to a more equal, prosperous world for all.

That's why we're also here today: to recommit ourselves to making good on our promises, as well as celebrate our aspirations for 'going beyond' Cairo and forging a global agenda suited to 21st century realities.

An agenda that affirms the human rights of women and young people, and sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, as ends in themselves first and foremost; but also so that we can make progress on so many fronts.

These are essential priorities if we want to achieve poverty eradication and the existing MDGs; education, health and gender equality; increase productivity and economic growth; improve food security and environmental sustainability; and harness demographic dividends.

Ladies and gentlemen, the global and regional outcomes and agreements of the ICPD review process point the way forward. These are encapsulated in the Secretary-General's *Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014*. The evidence is irrefutable: sexual and reproductive rights are at the very heart of people-centred sustainable development, keys to unleashing the full potential of all humanity.

That's why the High-Level Task Force on ICPD was formed -- to help make sure that these fundamental rights are not sidelined, but instead placed at the forefront of a new global agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen – we are at a defining moment. We must stay on the right side of history, by standing up for equality, and the rights and freedoms of all - for the sake of both present and for future generations. And we must act on the basis of knowledge and facts, not ideology and bias; from a place of courage, not fear.

As my friend Nelson Mandela so eloquently once stated: “For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

I hope you enjoy our event, and also take this opportunity to thank all our cohosts, the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Finland, Germany, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Slovenia, and South Africa.

And now, we have a special message from the Secretary General...if we can show the video please.

Thank you.