

Committee on Social Development

Item 2: Strategies for leaving no one behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement of behalf of UNFPA

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UNCC

(3-5 minutes)

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

As you know, this week is the mid-term review of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, where Member States will review the implementation of the 2013 Asia and the Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

Issues discussed during the mid-term review, include the relationship between population dynamics and inequalities, gender equality and sexual reproductive health and rights, and population, resilience and climate change – all of which are of importance to the work of the Committee on Social Development.

The work of the Committee is of critical importance and relevance for the effective implementation of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

UNFPA in Asia and the Pacific looks forward to continuing its work with the ESCAP Division on Social Development and to contributing to the work of the Committee – particularly with next year marking the 25th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Under the current agenda item, I would like to highlight some critical inter-linkages between women's economic empowerment and the achievement of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and elimination of all forms of violence, including harmful practices.

Globally, women's labour force participation decreases with each additional child by around 10-15% among women aged 25-39.

And, unintended pregnancy constrains women and girl's opportunities for education and economic advancement.

Violence against women leads to higher health costs, lost days at work, and lost income.

The estimated economic cost of gender-based violence runs from 1.2% to 3.7% of GDP – similar to what many countries spend on education.

One study, in Vietnam, found that the direct costs of domestic violence represents 21% of women's monthly income. Survivors of violence earned 35% less than women who were not abused.

In short, better sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes help drive economic growth and wellbeing.

Globally, we know that lower fertility contributes to increasing women's life expectancy, allowing them to pursue economic opportunities.

Smaller family size is associated with higher educational levels, and greater investment in girls.

And for each year marriage is delayed for girls, their likelihood of being literate increases by 5.6% and their chance of completing secondary school by 6.5%.

In our region alone, satisfying unmet need for contraception would reduce unplanned births by 75 percent. Provision of contraception would also help to reduce maternal deaths by 72 percent. This would improve women's educational attainment, boost their labour force participation and earnings, and increase household savings. Ending violence against women would protect women's income and livelihoods and reduce the burden of violence on societies and economies.

Ladies and gentlemen, the case for action is clear.

Increasing women's choices, including when and how to bear children and when and whom to marry, and realising their rights to live lives free of violence, and increasing their economic and social participation and empowerment - is critical, not only to leave no-one behind, but also to boost progress and wellbeing in our economies and societies as a whole.

Thank you.