



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza  
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations  
at the 29<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly  
on the follow-up of the Program of Action of the  
International Conference on Population and Development  
New York, 22 September 2014

Mr. President,

As we meet to consider the follow-up to the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, my delegation is aware of the many challenges that the international community still faces, in order to achieve the goal of greater, sustained economic and social development.

For one, so many people still live in extreme poverty. According to the Report of the Secretary General, although the “number of people globally living in extreme poverty fell by half [...] an estimated 1.2 billion poor people have been left behind in extreme poverty.”<sup>1</sup>

The significant fall of the number of people living in extreme poverty shows good progress since the Cairo Conference twenty years ago. At the same time, the world’s poor deserve and expect even greater results. Thus, we should refuse to be satisfied with the current results and press forward to consolidate the gains and achieve even more in favor of those left behind. Lifting them out of extreme poverty is the best guarantee for them to enjoy their basic rights and dignity.

My delegation believes that sustainable development can be best achieved through person-centered development policies, including the need to integrate migrants and the most vulnerable members of the society. While individuals and peoples have been on the move since time immemorial, migration has become truly a phenomenon of our times. More often than not, policy makers and large segments of society see migration only in a negative light. Negative stereotypes of migrants are used to promote policies detrimental to their rights and dignity. Moreover, migrants are often victims of trafficking, especially children and women. These are issues that demand our attention when tackling problems about population and development.

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<sup>1</sup> SG Report A/69/62 para 286

My delegation is concerned that documents and discussions successive to the Cairo Conference have shown a constant insistence on “reproductive health and rights” without due regard to the unborn. Attempts to suggest that the term “reproductive health” includes the right to abortion explicitly violate the language of the ICPD and divide efforts to address the real need of mothers and children.

The Catholic Church will remain committed to providing access to healthcare for everyone through its over 5,000 hospitals, 18,000 health clinics and 15,000 homes for the elderly, as well as other health institutions committed to ensuring the right to equal, effective and morally responsible health care for all.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate what Pope Francis said in his Address to the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, namely, that “Future Sustainable Development Goals must [...] be formulated and carried out with generosity and courage, so that they can have a real impact on the structural causes of poverty and hunger, attain more substantial results in protecting the environment, ensure dignified and productive labor for all, and provide appropriate protection for the family, which is an essential element in sustainable human and social development.”<sup>2</sup>

Thank you, Mr. President.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, 9 May 2014.