Dear Chair,

On behalf of the Bangladesh delegation, I am pleased to congratulate you on your chairmanship of the 7th APPC.

It is my privilege to provide an overview of Bangladesh’s progress on population and development issues since the 6th APPC. Several strategic interventions to achieve the 2013 APMD on Population and Development, ICPD Program of Action, and SDGs have contributed to marked improvement in a host of socio-economic indicators. We are proud to have witnessed a steadily declining poverty rate, even in the face of the challenges caused by COVID-19. We are cognizant of the need for continued vigilance to ensure that this continued growth comes to benefit all Bangladeshis equally.

Bangladesh has achieved important successes in the health sector, including in SRHR. The fertility rate is near replacement level, and life expectancy is at 72.4. Other indicators have also improved: skilled assisted delivery has increased, contributing to reduced maternal mortality and under-5 mortality. The UHC index of essential health services has improved. But we are not yet at the end of the road. Maternal mortality requires our continued efforts; as do reducing the unmet need for family planning, eliminating child marriage, and reducing adolescent fertility.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and to end child marriage and other harmful practices. However, the full implementation of laws and policies requires further action.

Female labour force participation increased to 42.8%, but remains mostly in the informal sector. The government is committed to include women’s unpaid household work in the country’s GDP. Gender parity is achieved at primary and secondary education but not at tertiary level. During COVID-19, school dropouts increased. The adult literacy rate has increased to 76.8%. Although Comprehensive Sexuality Education has been introduced in the recent edition of NCTB’s curriculum, more investment in human resources is required to fully implement CSE programs.

Bangladesh is in its demographic window of opportunity, and recognizes the challenge of ensuring adequate investment in education, health and decent jobs to leverage the potential of its youthful population. The proportion of older people is also rising, posing emerging challenges around ageing and social security. The government will accelerate institutional reforms and ensure healthy aging so as to benefit from the 2nd demographic dividend. Meanwhile, as Bangladesh is an exporter of labour to low fertility countries, the government is enacting Acts on Migration Governance and Welfare, introducing mandatory insurance coverage and ensuring migrants rights.

Bangladesh’s climate vulnerability is leading to a high rate of displacement and a proliferation of informal settlements. Women, girls, and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected. Bangladesh is hosting about one million Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals. The country needs continuous support from the international community to address these challenges.
The challenge of Leaving No One Behind requires high quality disaggregated data. The Government of Bangladesh is proud to have increased its efforts to generate such data, including through last year’s census, and the upcoming Violence Against Women survey.

Dear Chair,
Bangladesh is on track to graduate from the UN’s least developed country status by 2026. LDC graduation also brings some challenges. We are working to overcome those challenges by adopting more innovative approaches, including partnerships with the private sector and internal resource mobilization, to advance the country’s population and development agenda and achieving Sustainable Development- and ICPD goals.

Thank you.