PHILIPPINE COUNTRY STATEMENT
During the 7th Asian and Pacific Population Conference

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For Agenda No. 2: Review of progress made towards the implementation of the APMDPD and POA of the ICDP and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific

The Republic of the Philippines is pleased to share its significant progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and in fulfilling its commitment to the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. Significant progress has been achieved because the country’s long-term vision, AmBisyon Natin 2040 (Our Vision 2040), and its national development plans including the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 have supported the objectives of the Programme of Action and the country’s commitment to the Declaration.

The demographic landscape in the country has gradually shifted towards a greater opportunity for accelerated and inclusive socioeconomic development. While we remain one of countries with the highest populations in the region with 109 million Filipinos as of 2020, our population growth has declined to 1.6% within the period 2015-2020 from 3.0% in the 1970s. The slowdown in population growth has been mainly driven by the progressive decline in the total fertility rate which is already at 1.9 children in 2022, below replacement fertility level. The declining fertility level
has shifted our population age structure with a decreasing proportion of young age dependents (0-14 years old) and an increasing proportion of the working age population (15-64 years old), as well as that of older persons.

Mr./Madame Chairperson,

The Philippine Chairmanship of the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD55) held on 25-27 April 2022 in New York and sustained active engagement in the succeeding CPDs reaffirm the country’s strong commitment to protecting and advancing the gains of the 1994 Program of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development, which underscores the integral and mutually reinforcing linkages between population and development.

The Philippines has kept its commitment to effectively implement the ICPD Programme of Action and the Ministerial Declaration. Our sound economic fundamentals have translated into significant progress in reducing poverty through institutionalized policies and programs on social protection and a whole-of-society approach to poverty reduction. We are on our way towards recovering from the onslaught of the pandemic as indicated by improving macroeconomic indicators including gross domestic products and employment rates. Through the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law, the only one of its kind within the region, we have expanded our effort to ensure universal and equitable access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information including family planning services to individuals and couples. Our policies and programs in promoting gender equality have ranked the country at 16th place among 146 countries, according to the 2023 World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index. Just recently, the country has further improved the policy environment for gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence by
enacting the law that prohibits child marriage and increasing the age of sexual consent from 12 to 16 years. We also continue to address the root-causes of adolescent pregnancy and promote adolescent reproductive health as a national priority through a whole-of-government and society approach at all levels.

The Philippines reaffirms the positive role and contributions of migrants, to inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. The country has one of the most systematic and organized governance for international migration – from recruitment, deployment, to reintegration. Such a governance mechanism has been further strengthened by the organization and mobilization of the Department of Migrant Workers which consolidated all processes into a more effective mechanism to protect the wellbeing of Filipino migrant workers and to optimize the economic contribution of this demographic process. The rapid urbanization that is happening in the country also provides greater opportunities for interdependent urban and rural development.

The country has continued to strengthen its capacity to generate data and evidence for evidenced-based policies and programmes to attain the goals of the ICPD. The Philippine Statistical System has provided the statistics and data needed for crafting policies and program interventions – e.g., censuses of population done every 5 years, National Demographic and Health Survey done every 5 years, Family Income and Expenditure Survey done every three years, Labor Force Survey done monthly. Our statistical system has also expanded towards establishing local data and statistics to improve planning and policy development at the local and community levels. The Community Based Monitoring System, providing data for cities and municipalities, is for implementation nationwide in 2024 after its pilot in 2022. Our Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System which provides annual data on marriages, teenage pregnancy, causes of
death is one of the strongest in our region. We report that these censuses and surveys and systems are fully funded by our government.

Mr./Madame Chairperson,

To optimize the demographic opportunity in the country, we recognize the need to address the remaining development challenges faced by the country with greater and strategic resolve. Most important is in terms of addressing inequities in fulfilling human rights including sexual and reproductive health-care and services and reproductive rights among the poor. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health services including family planning need to be further ensured among poor women especially those in the geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, those in the informal economy and indigenous communities, and other marginalized sectors.

We also plan to intensify our efforts to develop our human capital with globally competitive education and skills, health, and wellbeing. Optimizing the economic potential from large proportion of labor force is likewise a challenge that need to be addressed by generating more jobs and gainful economic activities. Our growing proportion of older person also indicate the need for interventions to promote their health and socioeconomic wellbeing through intergenerational approaches that ensures the development of all Filipinos through their life course. Furthermore, as a country that is prone to natural disasters, our resiliency as a nation is likewise a priority action area that needs to be strengthened, down at the community and household levels.

To address these population and development agenda, we shall be guided by our Philippine Development Plan for 2023-2028 and the various sectoral development plans including the Philippine Population and Development Plan of Action for 2023-
2028. We shall continue to catalyze inter-agency actions to address pressing population related challenges, with a view to advancing people’s rights and well-being through inclusive and equitable development. Recognizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of each country’s demographic dynamics, we shall continue to foster South-South cooperation and leveraging Filipino expertise, not only to establish an effective knowledge-sharing platform but also to forge strategic regional partnerships and collaboration on population and development.

With this, Mr./Madame Chairperson, the Philippines renews its commitment to realize the thrusts and goals of the ICPD and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

Thank you for your kind attention.