Vanuatu Country Statement

Chair,

On behalf of the Vanuatu Government, allow me to convey our gratitude to the commitment of UNESCAP and UNFPA in organizing the 7th Asian and Pacific Population Conference (APPC7). We recognize the relevance and reaffirm our commitment to this event.

The ICPD and PoA calls for a holistic implementation. Progress and challenges still call for strategic and sustained interventions, and continued international cooperation to fulfill the promise of ICPD and the aspirational goals of the 2030 Development Agenda.

Our National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 is the paramount and foundational policy for all development in Vanuatu. Likewise, it reflects the core areas of the ICPD and the commitments of the 6th APPC.

We recognize the importance of human and financial investments for development to work towards addressing the existing gaps. In this light, Vanuatu stands committed to upholding the MOANA Declaration and the 2050 STRATEGY FOR THE BLUE PACIFIC.

Chair, urban poverty and high youth unemployment is as an urgent concern. We are committed to invest in education and to drive the expansion of SMEs to generate income and promote entrepreneurship, particularly amongst youth and women in recalling its our commitment to the SAMOA Pathway.

The health system faces significant challenges in balancing increasing demands and shifting priorities in its pursuit of Universal Health Coverage. Disruptions caused by limited resourcing, natural disasters and disease outbreaks continue to place a burden on the health system.

Contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods is low at 48%. Unmet need for modern contraceptives remains high at 24%. Maternal, infant and neonatal deaths and stunting in children under 5 still exists. We remain committed to ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all our peoples, without discrimination.
Chair, Vanuatu’s low literacy rate and structural inequalities undermine equitable and sustainable development. GBV is a serious and widespread problem in Vanuatu. Three in five women in a relationship have experienced either physical or sexual violence (or both) by a husband or intimate partner.

The Government has prioritized gender equality and prevention of GBV but needs continued support from all partners to fully implement programs and monitor policy objectives articulated in the National Gender Equality Policy and the Family Protection Act.

Young people under the age of 24 years account for 57% of the total population in Vanuatu. We are seeing a steady adolescent birth rate of 81 per 10,000. However, we are committed to creating opportunities for young people through instruments like the Youth Act and RMNCAH Policy.

Madam chair, there are challenges in data collection but we remain committed to improve its coordination across the statistical system to improve the availability of timely, reliable and high-quality statistics.

Vanuatu is known as the world's most at-risk country for natural disasters. Covid 19 pandemic has also impacted the country socially and economically. We recognize that the risks of future pandemics and disasters will remain a threat to the country’s sustainable development. The Vanuatu CCDRR Policy for instance, is aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Pacific’s KAILA! Declaration.

In conclusion, despite our gaps and challenges, Vanuatu will remain committed to the ICPD agenda, and the 7th APPC as it supports the Vanuatu NSDP 2030 and we reaffirm our alignment to the regional statement presented by Cook Islands.

Chair, thank you