Statement
by
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at the
Regional Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Outcomes
of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference
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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Heads of Delegations of the Member States,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

The delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) would like to begin by thanking the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for inviting Cambodia to this regional intergovernmental meeting for reviewing the outcomes of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference held in 2013.

Since endorsing the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration (APMD) on Population and Development adopted by the Sixth APPC which highlighted policy directions for effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (Cairo, 1994), Cambodia remains fully a strong supporter of this international framework. The RGC recognizes the linkages between ICPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It further reaffirms its commitment to achieving the ICPD Programme of Action in the region: Advance the key actions outlined in the ICPD beyond 2014 and mobilize political support, expand partnerships and urge allocation of adequate resources at the national and regional level.
Cambodia is pleased to inform this plenary that the RGC has continued to develop the country within a market-based economy pursuing an indicative planning approach. The Rectangular Strategy (RS) and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) have together provided a national development policy framework that has enabled Cambodia to achieve a high level of economic growth. As such Cambodia is in a position to report considerable progress in all the eleven thematic areas identified in the APMD.

1 Poverty eradication and employment:

Cambodia has achieved significant declines in poverty and inequality and the prevalence of extreme hunger has been eliminated. However, many live just barely above the poverty line and remain highly vulnerable to falling back into poverty. As a safeguard, RGC has adopted a National Social Protection Policy Framework for 2016-2025 with two main pillars: Social Assistance for Poor and Vulnerable People, and Social Insurance. The RGC considers progress in this area fundamental to achieving the SDGs.

2 Health:

Considerable expansion in the health sector has resulted in increasing access to quality health care. Significant achievements have included declines in maternal and child mortality, reduction in the spread of communicable diseases, and a country-wide expansion of Health Equity Funds (HEFs) for the poor.
3 Sexual and reproductive health and rights:

The RGC launched the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Cambodia 2017-2020. As a result, considerable progress has been made in improving the availability and delivery of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services. There is however, still a need to address the unmet need for birth spacing and improve birth spacing service provisions in the country.

4 Education:

Overall performance in the education sector has been satisfactory. The primary completion rate has risen and gender disparities have been eliminated at both the primary and secondary levels. Considerable progress has been achieved in incorporating Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the curricula. However, there is a need for improvement of the CSE curricula in order to ensure alignment with international standards, be responsive to the reality of young people in Cambodia and help them meet the challenges of transition into adulthood.

5 Gender equality and women’s empowerment:

Gender parity has been achieved at the upper secondary level and at the tertiary level the ratio of females to males has more than doubled since 2000 from 38 to 85. Female representation in public sector employment and elected offices has increased significantly. However, in wage employment the proportion of women has remained stagnant.
6 Adolescents and young people:

The RGC launched a comprehensive National Policy on Youth Development in 2011. The process of implementing this Policy takes into account all relevant recommendations of the APMD.

7 Ageing:

The RGC revised the Policy for the Elderly (2003) and widened its scope, renaming it the National Ageing Policy 2017-2030. The Policy incorporates provisions for promoting healthy ageing, improving access to infrastructure and services and giving special attention to the needs of older persons left behind in rural areas.

8 International migration:

The RGC has put in place the National Employment Policy 2015-2025 aimed at absorbing productively the large number of young Cambodians entering the domestic labour market and the Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia 2015-2018 aimed at responding to foreign labour market demands. A comprehensive legal and institutional framework to address human trafficking has been put in place.

9 Urbanization and internal migration:

The RGC has attached priority to urban development. As a result the proportion of urban dwellers having access to potable water and sanitation services has increased and the proportion of slum population in Cambodia’s urban areas has been on the decline.
10 Population and sustainable development:

Satisfactory progress can be reported in the management of protected areas and sustainable development/climate change. However, with deforestation there has been a decline in forest cover. Availability of safe water and coverage of sanitation have improved. In the area of Disaster Management, the RGC has adopted and implemented national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

11 Data and statistics:

The RGC formulated a Statistical Master Plan (SMP) setting out a long-term, prioritised plan for Cambodia’s national statistical system (NSS) for the period 2006 to 2015. To improve timely and wider dissemination of the data, a comprehensive National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2018-2023 has been launched.

Before concluding, the delegation would like to point out that challenges have remained. The economy continues to be narrow-based. The reclassification of Cambodia as a Lower Middle Income Country has impacted negatively on external funding. There is also need to develop a comprehensive national resource plan to ensure availability of an adequate supply of skills needed for sustained development. The RGC is confident that the solid policy framework put in place over the years provides an adequate base to ensure future progress.

However, RGC recognizes that the policy frameworks remain to be translated into concrete actions towards achieving our shared goals of the ICPD PoA. The RGC would call on the international community for the
better flow of financial resources (ODA) for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action. As part of the outcome of this review we urge that there be a monitoring framework for the Asia Pacific region in terms of tracking progress.

To conclude, the Cambodian delegation looks forward to benefiting from participating in the discussions of this Review Meeting. We are pleased to restate our support for continued implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs as renewed with our endorsement of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

In addition, our delegation stands ready to endorse, after due consideration, decisions made in this Meeting for the sake of our global prosperity that will ensure leaving no one behind.

Thank you for your attention.