Country Statement of Item 2 for Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

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Mr. Chairman:

The 1994 ICPD Programme of Action is of epoch-making significance. We are pleased to see that with the concerted global efforts, the goals set out in the Programme of Action have been better implemented. The Chinese delegation reiterates its support for the 2013 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. In the context of globalization, we will focus our core objectives in a more active, responsible and effective manner to realize our commitment on focusing population and development, promoting people-centered reproductive health and women’s empowerment. We call on all governments to uphold the principles and purposes of the ICPD, fully mobilize domestic and international resources, and provide more resources for developing countries to achieve the goals of the Programme of Action at an early date.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

China is a developing country with a population of 1.39 billion. The large population is the basic national condition that China must face for a long time. In the past five years, the Chinese government has earnestly fulfilled its commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, and adhered to the overall development of people, taking the sustainable development road by coordinating population and economy, society, resources and environment with Chinese characteristics. China is committed to and has achieved remarkable results in the fields of economic development, poverty eradication, education for all, health care improvement, the status of women empowerment, and promotion of long-term balanced population development.
China prioritizes the reduction and elimination of poverty in economic and social development, and requires to address the problem of regional overall poverty by 2020 and complete the poverty alleviation of the rural impoverished people under the current standards. The work of governments at all levels is centered on the goal of comprehensive poverty alleviation in 2020. With the efforts of all parties, the size of the unfortunate people has been greatly reduced. The number of rural poor fell from 82.49 million in 2013 to 30.46 million in 2017, and poverty incidence fell to 3.1% in 2017.

In 2015, the Chinese government proposed to promote healthy China. With the gradual implementation of the healthy China strategy, medical reform has continued to advance in depth, the health needs of the people have been continuously met, and the health of the people has continued to improve. In 2017, the average life expectancy of Chinese residents reached 76.7 years, and the infant mortality rate dropped from 9.5 in 2013 to 6.8 in 2017. The maternal mortality rate dropped from 23.2/100,000 to 19.6/100,000 in the same period. The indicators are generally better than the average of middle and high-income countries.

China has actively promoted the improvement of the population policy and achieved remarkable results. Since 2016, the comprehensive two-child policy has been implemented. The proportion of second child births has increased year by year, from 36% before 2013 to 51% in 2017. We are actively building a childbearing friendly social environment and promoting policies to improve medical care, childcare, education, taxation, social security, housing, and family support. We will develop economic and social development, respect and protect human rights, and promote gender equality and population. Development is more closely integrated.

The government of China accelerates equal access to essential public services, pays special attention to adolescent sexual and reproductive health education and services, and speeds up efforts in achieving the goal of equal access to reproductive health and family planning services for all. In 2017, more than 80% of the regions carried out adolescent sexual and reproductive health education, strengthened the life skills of adolescents, and improved the ability to prevent STIs and HIVs. The mother-to-child HIV transmission is controlled at 5.5%, with almost no new cases of blood transmission. More than 80% of people living with HIV are receiving antiretroviral treatment.

We have constantly promoted gender equality. The gap between genders in the field of education is shrinking. In 2015, the net enrollment rate of primary school-age girls was 99.9%, almost the same as that of boys. The employment scale of women continues to expand, with women accounting for 42.9% of the total employment in the society. The "Anti-Domestic Violence Law" was officially implemented in 2016 to further protect the legitimate rights and interests of women and children.

We have actively responded to the aging of the population, a long-term strategic task for China. Since 2013, the government has issued more than 20 documents to promote
the combination of medical care, the development of the elderly health industry and the social participation of the elderly. The laws and policies on the protection of the rights and interests of the elderly, and the development of the elderly care service industry have been continuously improved; the coverage of basic elderly care and basic medical care has been continuously expanded, and the level of protection has been improved year by year; based on the foundation of the family, the community is the support, the institution is the supplement, and the medical care is combined. The pension service system is being formed which mainly relies on families with the support of communities and supplemented with institutional care and treatment of medical facilities.

We clearly understand that the current Chinese population still faces a series of problems and challenges that cannot be ignored. The population aging process is accelerating, the scale of labor is gradually shrinking, the pressure on resources and environment is increasing, and the interaction between population, economic and social development is more complicated.

To this end, the Chinese government will continue to uphold the spirit and principles of the Programme of Action, adhere to comprehensive population and development decisions, pay close attention to the dynamic balance between population size, health and education, demographic structure and geographic distribution, as well as coordinate population and economy, society, resources and environment. China will continue to adhere to comprehensive decision-making on population and development, strengthen research on population development strategy, strengthen the linkage of relevant economic and social policies, convert population pressure into human capital dividends, carry out poverty reduction undertakings in depth, improve family development capabilities, and continue to promote new urbanization. China will guide the rational flow of population, improve the population structure and distribution; improve the social security system, actively respond to the aging of the population; improve the health service system, promote the equalization of basic public services, and pay special attention to the vulnerable public groups in the society can enjoy basic public health services.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The population problem is essentially a development issue. It is necessary to establish the concept of “making priority investment in people's comprehensive development”, to meet the needs of people at different levels, to improve people's wellbeing and capacity, to fully tap people's potential and characteristics, and to transform the population into human resources and a drive for wealth creation in the process of people's all-round development.

Achieving the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a common task for China and the rest of the world. The
international community should strengthen its confidence, work together, and move toward new development goals. China is willing to further strengthen international cooperation in the field of population and development, and make unremitting efforts to achieve all-round human development, promote sustainable economic and social development, and enhance human well-being.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!