Mid Term Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

Agenda item 3: Thematic discussion on emerging issues and gaps

Panel (c) Population dynamics, vulnerable groups and resilience to climate change and disasters

Statement of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (3 mins)

Delivered by Republic of Kiribati

1. Mister Chair, distinguished panelists, on behalf of 10 Pacific Island Countries and Territories, namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, I would like to express our appreciation for the informative remarks. We also extend our thanks to ESCAP and UNFPA for placing a spotlight on this important topic. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters in vulnerable Pacific Island Countries, which is contributing to population displacement and negatively affecting our efforts to reduce poverty and inequality.

2. In 2015, the Pacific Islands adopted the KAILA Declaration which outlines important measures to strengthen climate change resilience through realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights, and improving maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. In the context of the KAILA and Ministerial Declarations we emphasize the need for Pacific voices in global conversations to share our diverse experiences in climate change risks and resilience which may benefit others while ensuring that our specific needs are addressed.

3. Central to the KAILA Declaration is a recognition that climate change affects everyone however women, children and young people are disproportionately affected and we therefore highlighted the importance of engaging civil society, women, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, as equal partners, in all efforts towards building climate change resilience, including the prevention and response to gender-based violence. Our call for action includes the following points, which we believe align well with the comments made by panelists today and the Ministerial Declaration currently under review:

   • Focus efforts towards ensuring that women and girls are able to exercise their right to be agents and beneficiaries of climate change action through full participation in shaping these actions and responses.
   • Collect data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location and other relevant factors in relation to climate change and the impact on the health of women, children and adolescents and ensure that this data is utilized in vulnerability and adaptation assessments.
   • Strengthen interventions in support of and protection for women and girls, including enhancing access to education and comprehensive mechanisms for ensuring their access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.

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• Strengthen services, for the delivery of healthcare and the urgent deployment of humanitarian and relief supplies for reproductive, maternal, newborn, adolescent and child health during emergencies particularly to vulnerable populations living in outer islands and difficult-to-reach areas.

• Prioritise couples and individuals access to contraception and information so as to enable free and informed decisions about the number and timing of children, thereby preventing unintended and unplanned pregnancies and reducing the need for abortion.

4. As part of the way forward clearly spelt out by panelists we would like to underscore the role that our cultural and traditional knowledge and practices can play in coming up with home grown solutions to help address some of the remaining challenges of the ICPD in line with the KAILA Declaration.

5. In conclusion, Mister Chair and esteemed panelists, in the Pacific we are on the frontline of climate change impacts and we therefore reaffirm our commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2013 Ministerial Declaration which recognizes the importance of environmental factors in shaping population dynamics, development and individual wellbeing.

I thank you for your attention.

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2 Report on the ICPD, 1994, chapter 1, resolution 1.