



*Check against delivery*

**Commission on Population and  
Development  
45<sup>th</sup> Session  
Economic and Social Council**

**Statement by  
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**Agenda Item 5:**

**“General Debate on the Contribution of  
Population and Development Issues to the Theme  
of the Annual Ministerial Review in 2012”**

**New York, 25 April 2012**

Mr. Chairperson,

The theme of the 2012 annual ministerial review of ECOSOC is of the utmost importance, given the present state of the world economy.

While we can take comfort in the fact that there has been rapid decline in global poverty as the result of commitment to the MDGs, especially MDG 1, we have to acknowledge that far too many people still continue to live below the poverty line. Mostly affected in this way are young people.

Indeed, many young people are part of the productive workforce. However, they primarily work in the informal sector, where working conditions are quite poor and wages are relatively low. Their situation is made even more difficult at present because the world economy is operating under a cloud of uncertainty. It means the need to achieve new breakthroughs in poverty reduction and make the global economy more robust remains urgent. Therefore, it should not be removed from the international development agenda.

Because adolescents and youth are an integral part of the world's productive labour force and contribute to significant economic activities, their challenges and needs merit attention. Unfortunately, most adolescent and youth exist as members of less privileged communities. Some of them drop out of school too early. They then face the demands of the labour market with insufficient knowledge, little or no training, as well as an absence of skills and work experiences. These conditions would not allow them to obtain employment easily.

Indonesia believes that the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review Meeting will be enriched by our discussion today on the importance of the issue of adolescents and youth in the context of population and development.

Mr. Chairperson,

Focusing on its adolescent and youth, Indonesia has been expending energy and resources to secure the interests of this segment of the national population. Our objectives are to equip them with marketable skills so their productivity will improve, to allow them a greater role in the development process, and to advocate on their behalf for specific programs tailored to their particular social needs. For young women and adolescent girls the focus will also be on their sexual and reproductive health needs.

To equip adolescents and youth with relevant knowledge and skills to boost their productivity, Indonesia is projecting to extend the basic compulsory education program to 12 years. An emphasis is being placed on technical high schools and training centres to attract those young people who do not intend to pursue tertiary education. This initiative is being implemented along with the provision of up-to-date information and services for youth and adolescent on sexual and reproductive health.

As part of the strategy to increase employment opportunities for adolescent and youth, Indonesia is taking steps to adopt youth-sensitive policies on industrialization and national development. We regard this approach as a requirement to make our

adolescent and youth sufficiently experienced and competitive for the labour market. Furthermore, to ensure the smooth continuity of the development process, from one generation to the next, greater access of our adolescents and youth to such development process is guaranteed.

Mr. Chairperson,

In accordance with known historical imperatives of global development, Indonesia sees the need for adolescent and youth to apply their creative energies to the manufacture of new products for the world market. We are encouraging them to be more innovative and creative as partners in the development process. Funding is being used to open up doors of opportunity for them to give of their very best as creative workers and small-scale entrepreneurs. As a result, today more and more of our young people are involved in the creation of IT products.

Indonesia is of the view that this strategy will help to further reduce poverty. It also serves to turn what could have been a social liability into a development asset. The great number of adolescents and youth are expected to become a demographic bonus. Probably the biggest benefit to Indonesia in doing this is that the strategy narrows income gaps within and between the various communities of the country. It allows Indonesia to secure the welfare and prosperity of all areas.

But in addition to nations pursuing continuous economic growth, as Indonesia is, we believe there has to be a fundamental change in perspective on development. It will allow for a more accurate measure of its success. The way it is currently measured is heavily skewed in favour of economic growth as revealed by income per capita. The concept of development must therefore be widened to incorporate socio-political and environmental factors. This expansion must take note of the needs, rights and potential contributions of adolescent and youth as the workers of the future who will be responsible for national and global development.

This is the real challenge facing us all, bringing about a paradigm shift in the way we perceive and measure the success of the development process. This will require that the global community of nations move away from the traditional view of economic growth as the only factor to a more comprehensive notion. The welfare of the individual must assume a more prominent role. It must not be just a matter of economic growth. Without the obvious paradigm shift, people-centered development, as mandated by the ICPD Agreement and Millennium Summit, will prove to be an elusive target. It may or may not be accomplished within the framework of future economic development because of the way the process is measured. That must change.

I thank you.