

Statement by Ireland to UNFPA Board Meeting

8 September 2009

Mr. President

Ireland thanks Dr. Obaid for her statement to the Executive Board this morning. We particularly value her leadership in these difficult times.

As the Executive Director has noted, this year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. Ireland would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

At the conference, 179 countries agreed that meeting needs for education and health, including reproductive health, is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The ICPD placed education of girls, maternal health and the empowerment and status of women, among other vital issues, at the heart of the international agenda.

The ICPD Programme of Action remains the primary vehicle to achieve MDG5, to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015. To achieve this goal, we require political will, investment in reproductive health and gender equality.

Ireland believes that the recent discussions, in the context of the System-wide Coherence consultations, on establishing a new UN gender entity have registered significant progress. We appreciate the leadership shown by the Co-Chairs – the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Namibia - and strongly support their view that the General Assembly take action before the end of this session on establishing a Composite Entity. The new entity will have the capacity to deliver real advances in gender equality. When fully operational, it will assist girls to remain in school and enable women to access quality health care and to better participate in decision making in their homes and in public life.

We further strongly support the Co-Chairs recommendations in the areas of Funding and Governance, two areas which are essential for the efficient and effective operation of the United Nations system in supporting countries achieve sustainable development.

We look forward to adopting a consensus Resolution sealing the progress we have made on these vital issues.

UNFPA has been moving ahead with efforts to improve the way the UN System operates. We welcome the important role played by UNFPA in the undg Working Group on Joint Funding, Financial and Audit issues and note the compilation of a work plan which includes a number of recommendations and deliverables on harmonisation.

We encourage UNFPA to continue its valued leadership in this area.

Ireland commends UNFPA for its use of the Delivering as One framework to implement new mechanisms for improved aid effectiveness in support of MDG 5. UNFPA engages in health SWAPs in 30 countries and uses pooled funds in 12 of those. It is active in pursuing better coordination at country level. During a recent visit by Irish Aid to Tanzania, UNFPA stated that Delivering as One was the optimal way to promote gains in the reproductive health area. We welcome and share this view.

Mr. President

Ireland has placed maternal health care at the centre of its support to the health sectors of our development partner governments. In Tanzania, Ireland is the lead donor in the health sector. With Irish support, in Mwanayamala hospital in Dar es Salaam, 40 to 60 babies are born safely every day. Our Minister for Overseas Development, Mr. Peter Power T.D., recently visited Dodoma in Tanzania where he was greatly impressed by a One UN maternal health programme, implemented jointly by UNFPA and UNICEF, increasing access of expectant mothers to obstetric care through provision of an ambulance service.

Mr. President

Ireland thanks the Executive Director for the updated financial information in the biennial support budget for 2010 to 2011. UNFPA has taken a modest and realistic approach and Ireland commends the focus on efficiency gains evident in preparation of the budget. We welcome the greater attention given to field rather than headquarters requirements and the efforts to enhance harmonisation with UNDP and UNICEF in the area of results based budgeting. Ireland encourages UNFPA to continue in these efforts.

UNFPA has made progress towards the adoption of IPSAS (International Public Service Accounting Standards), which is to be completed by 2012. Ireland also thanks the Executive Director for her updates on the implementation process, and we look forward to receiving further periodic updates. We are confident that IPSAS will allow for streamlined financial reporting and we commend the UN agencies for their efforts to advance this difficult process.

Mr. President

In closing, Ireland looks forward to participating in the special General Assembly session to commemorate the ICPD on the 12th of October. It will afford us all a valuable opportunity to assess progress in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, essential to achieving the MDGs.

Thank you