Executive Board UNDP-UNFPA-UNOPS
First Regular Session 2014
UNFPA Segment

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC)

New York, 27-31 January 2014
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

We would like to thank Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director and his team for the valuable information and documentation that have been presented for the consideration of the Board.

Mr. Chairman,

The International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 marked a critical moment for the United Nations development agenda. The broad mandate and the principles agreed in the Programme of Action remain of critical importance for the international community, which is why the General Assembly determined that the Program should continue to be implemented beyond 2014, as reflected in Resolution 65/234.

In that regard, CELAC countries express their strong support to the mandate of the ICPD beyond 2014, as well as the inclusion of population issues in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

During these twenty years, the Latin American and Caribbean region has experimented significant progress regarding the objectives of the ICPD, thanks to national efforts, along with UNFPA’s work in the region, and its contribution to national development strategies.

Tens of millions have been lifted out of poverty in recent years, there has been progress in gender equality and non-discrimination of women; public health programs have been influenced by a reproductive rights perspective and, instead of only focusing on maternal and child health, a more comprehensive perspective of women’s health has been introduced.

Moreover, access to modern contraceptive methods is much more prevalent and more women have been able to achieve desired fertility levels. Programs to combat violence against women have emerged in all countries, and legal mechanisms for tackling violence against women have become more rooted in police and systems
There are, however, some gaps that are pending and should be noted. MDG 5’s improvements on maternal health is lagging behind, gender pay inequity is still prevalent, and women that suffer poverty and social and economic exclusion, particularly poor, rural and indigenous women, as well as adolescents and young women, have not benefitted from the improvements in an equitable way.

We reiterate our commitment with the achievement of MDG 5, including by creating synergies with non-state actors and strengthening cooperation with UNFPA in order to improve the living conditions of all women and girls, with a special focus on those who live in vulnerable situations.

Mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a priority for all CELAC countries. In the new agenda, we need to continue working on these issues based on the improvement we already achieved with the MDGs. We need to continue closing the gaps between rich and poor women and girls, paying the most needed attention to the vulnerable populations. All the fundamental rights and freedoms need to be ensured without any discrimination, particularly the right to food, the right to development, the right to education, the right to health, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health, equal economic opportunities, social protection and access to justice among others.

Mr. Chairman,

For a region made up mostly by middle-income countries, the role of UNFPA in the support of designing programs aimed at overcoming the gaps is critical. In this regard, the full support of the UN system is essential, in order to help our countries change the perspective provided by public health services, making them more sensitive to gender issues and cultural diversity.

We should also develop more effective methods to reach dispersed rural populations as well as groups facing various types of discrimination or vulnerabilities, including through the development of programs focused on differentiated services for adolescents.

We would like to recall the view of our region, for UNFPA to continue its mandate and programming in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Last year the UNFPA presented and obtained the approval of its Strategic Plan, with a new classification for presence and programming that will affect some countries of our region that have clear development needs. Others will have to phase a cost-sharing, which most likely will affect the physical presence of the UNFPA in our region in the medium term. We reiterate that our region faces serious developing challenges where the presence and
work of the UN development system, particularly UNFPA, could make a great contribution.

Mr. Chairman,

CELAC countries are confident that these critical issues will be discussed in a transparent and fair manner, and will be properly addressed in the decisions to be considered during this year. We would highly appreciate the support of UNFPA and the political will of our development partners in that regard.

By doing so, we would be in line with the principle of universality of the operational activities for development, and with the consistent support of Latin America and the Caribbean to UNFPA mandates and activities, and the Population and Development Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in close coordination with ECLAC, UNFPA and other intergovernmental entities and non-state actors, adopted the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. This important document is not only a strong contribution to the implementation of the ICPD Agenda ahead of its 20th Anniversary, but is also a guidance for our countries to overcome the remaining development and social challenges, while maintaining what we have achieved so far.

In addition, the responsibilities and mandates given to UNFPA in the Montevideo Consensus are a signal of our commitment and trust in the Fund, and a clear indication of the responsibilities and important roles UNFPA should continue to play in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

CELAC Members support all Draft Country Programmes Document that will be considered for adoption or extension by the Executive Board at this First Regular Session.

I thank you.