

STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, (UNFPA)

First meeting of the Preparatory Committee to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

17 May, 2010

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, welcomes the preparatory process for Rio+20. The interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development are articulated in the Programme of Action that was adopted by the world's nations two years after the Rio Summit, in 1994 in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development. Last year, governments in every region reaffirmed their commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and endorsed its continuing relevance to efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

As we approach a global population of 7 billion, about 1 billion are still living in extreme poverty. To reduce poverty while ensuring environmental sustainability, including the mitigation of climate change, we must progress towards a green economy and population stabilization. To achieve population stabilization, we need a focus on women's empowerment, gender equality and universal access to reproductive health. UNFPA's State of World Population 2009 report makes the case for addressing population concerns and advancing the rights and participation of women in our collective response to our changing climate. This report also supports many of the points on gender made by the distinguished representative of the United States.

As the statements this morning highlighted, comparable and accessible data are essential for a common approach to reviewing and promoting progress towards the implementation of Agenda 21. Nearly half of all people now live in urban areas, and almost all projected future growth will take place in cities in the developing world, which are exposed to considerable environmental risk. Developing common data on urban vulnerability is therefore critical to sustainable development.

To support a strong foundation of information and evidence, UNFPA is committed to building country capacity for the use of population related data, including demographic and health surveys and censuses. The 2010 round of censuses provides a significant opportunity to establish a shared foundation of population data for environmental uses for the next decade.

UNFPA looks forward to working closely with the Member States, UN organizations and other partners in the preparations for Rio+20. Thank you.