



Partners in Population and Development
A South-South Initiative

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**Fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women
22 February-4 March 2011, Agenda item 3: Gender Equality, Development and Peace
for the 21st Century**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to make a short statement on behalf of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD). PPD is an intergovernmental alliance of 25 developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, committed to the promotion of South-South cooperation among developing countries.

This Fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is historic as it heralds the launching of UN-Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The entity has had an auspicious genesis, with Dr. Michelle Bachelet as the founding Executive Director. PPD is confident that UN-Women, under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Bachelet, will play its mandated role in an exemplary way and significantly contribute not only to an improvement of the status of girls and women all around the globe, but also to real empowerment of women in the economic, political and social spheres of life, thus enabling them to shape and impact development, peace and security in the world.

PPD notes with concern that the current role and status of women and their participation in national and global affairs is totally inadequate. The persistence of gender inequality and inequity characterized, inter alia, by a lack of access of women to education, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels and to well paying jobs and political participation; and by suffering the risk of exposure to maternal mortality, unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, trafficking, as well as early and forced marriages have immensely marginalized women in the world.

Mr. Chairman,
Partners in Population and Development promotes, among other priorities, integration of MDGs, the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

and the Beijing Platform for Action by ensuring that the linkages between population dynamics, reproductive health, gender equality and poverty remain central to the formulation and implementation of development plans and poverty reduction strategies. PPD recognizes that investments in women's empowerment and gender equality offer multiple rewards for accelerated social and economic progress, as well as for peace and security.

The special focus of this session on women's access to education, science, technology and jobs is both timely and critical for women's empowerment and for addressing gender inequality. As the ICPD Programme of Action emphasized, "education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process". As many delegations have already emphasized, women in tertiary education are significantly underrepresented in the disciplines of science, mathematics and engineering. This imbalance must be redressed for ensuring both rapid pace of development and for achieving greater gender equity in education and employment.

Investing in girls' and women's education has a positive multiplier effect for poverty reduction, developmental gains, demographic transition, reproductive health and rights and other benefits. PPD, therefore, believes that it would be essential to adopt, in particular, a comprehensive, culturally sensitive, holistic and rights-based approach in addressing the interlinked issues of women's empowerment, gender inequality, gender-based violence and reproductive health and rights, including family planning and HIV/AIDS. PPD member countries have reiterated their commitment to these policy perspectives in many of their declarations, including those of Morocco, Kampala and Yogyakarta.

Mr. Chairman,

The PPD alliance of developing countries, among other features, reflects a diversity of experiences in population, gender and development issues. It thus serves as a good platform to share lessons learned in successes achieved, as well as challenges faced by member countries. It is strategically positioned for a useful exchange of learning experiences, including through South-South cooperation. PPD is therefore encouraging South-South cooperation activities in its member and other countries through training and capacity-building, through knowledge sharing by documenting innovative practices in population, gender and reproductive health, and through information exchange, policy dialogue and advocacy.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Partners in Population and Development would like to congratulate Dr. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as the Executive Director and wish UN- Women great success with its mission. PPD is convinced that, with your able leadership, Mr. Chairman, the Commission would succeed in providing the necessary support, advice and guidance to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women all around the world.

Thank you very much for your attention!