

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### Communicating Population for Development Planning

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National Conference on Communicating Population  
For Development Planning*

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*Right Honorable President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav;  
Honorable Chair of this Conference and Chairman of the Conference Advisory Committee;  
Honorable Minister of Health and Population, Mr. Khaga Raj Adhikari  
Professor Terry Hall, President, Asian Population Association;  
Mr. Jamie McGoldrick, UN Resident Coordinator;  
Ms. Anjali Sen, Regional Director, IPPF/SARO;  
Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Plenary and Parallel Sessions and the Paper Presenters  
Members of the CAC, COC and CSC;  
Distinguished Personalities, Media Representatives, and Participants in the Conference.*

#### **A. Background**

Let me begin by bringing to light some of the important events and issues related to the main theme of the Conference.

1. Population issues in the 21st century are different from those in the last century. Debates about population and development policy now reach far beyond family planning and reproductive health.
2. Age and sex structure and distribution of the population determine the future needs for housing, employment, health services, transportation, and communication facilities.

#### **B. Migration**

3. Men and women often have unequal access to information on migration, employment, financial and social services, and integration or reintegration assistance with varying degrees of vulnerability and risk of abuse.
4. Migration of women and children especially in irregular migration involves risk of isolation, discrimination, exploitation, trafficking, forced evictions, marginalization and poor working conditions. It deprives them of education, health and social services.

5. Remittances sent home by migrants at the origin contributes to education and health of children left behind. The number of cross-border migrants and the amount of cash flows across borders to support home communities is among the fastest-growing international financial flows. In Nepal alone, remittance contributes 25 percent to GDP in Nepal helping to strengthen education dividend of the country.
6. Migration is also a fragmented portfolio falling under the responsibility of various government departments.

**C. Adolescents and Youth** (*Take hold of your future or future will take hold of you*).

7. Even though ICPD had a strong language on sexual education for young people, some vital questions remain unanswered.
  - Many adolescents become pregnant married or unmarried without opportunity for further education.
  - Adolescents lack adequate information on how to avoid a pregnancy they are not prepared for.
  - Young girls are forced into marriages they don't desire.
  - We are afraid that a comprehensive sexuality education would encourage young people to have sex early, or even adopt another sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI).

**D. Gender Inequality**

8. International human rights standard and instruments enshrine equal rights of women and men. But in reality this has not materialized.
9. Unequal gender relations have kept women vulnerable to sexual abuse and gender violence in their daily lives?
10. Women have less or no access to land ownership than men. Those who have some are of small size with low quality obtained through male family members. They lose entitlements in case of divorce and widowhood.
11. Sex based discrimination on land ownership is the foremost factor for the violation of economic, social and cultural rights of women in Nepal and in similar countries elsewhere. This severely affects food security due to their limited access to productive resources. Women hold the key to global food security
12. Women who have rights over land and housing, independent from those of their husbands or fathers, are more respected in the community, avoid situations of violence, and are better able to improve their own lives as well as those of their children.
13. Nepal Human Development Report 2014 emphasized on increasing human capability through human productive ability for reducing poverty gap and gender inequality with reference to Less-developed areas and among more disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people in Nepal.

## **E. Policy Instruments**

14. Ideologically driven debates have been manifest
15. At the Belgrade, Bucharest, and Mexico World Population Conferences in relation to family planning or socioeconomic development as the best contraceptive. Reality on the ground and the rhetoric in the conference rooms were different.
16. 1974 World Population Plan of Action mentioned women only twice, both times in the context of fertility. Ten years later, the Mexico City recommendations included one (Recommendation 11) on the status of women and said: "Improving the status of women and enhancing their role is an important goal in itself and will influence family life positively."
17. In September, 1994, International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo. It was followed by a series of plus five, ten, 15 and 20 (2014).
18. Even after 20 years of ICPD, many of the Cairo goals are still far from complete?
  - Many girls start but not finish school?
  - Many adolescents are ignorant of the basic facts of sexuality and reproduction. Many girls married before they are old enough to make their own decisions.
  - Many women, married and unmarried, vulnerable to gender-based violence.
  - Many women suffer and die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.
  - Unsafe abortion stills a major cause of maternal mortality and disability?
  - Child marriage and child pregnancy are still prevalent.
  - Most RH services are directed at married women with children but not at the unmarried, childless, adolescents and most men, young people out of school, IDU's, sex workers and the LGBT community.
  - The rights of LGBT people are still not universally recognized and protected.
  - Reproductive lives of poor women in poor communities have not changed.
  - Maternal mortality rates are far short of ICPD's goal of 75 per cent.
  - Most of the women with unmet need for family planning are poor and illiterate.
  - Men have not become full partners in the fight for human rights.
  - Men's view of women's empowerment and gender equality is blurred.
  - Many women are not ready yet to believe that human rights for women are human rights for everyone.
19. MDG framework was a negotiated merger of key elements of Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and Nairobi Programs of action/Priority Agendas into one policy pot. After MDG in 2000, PoA is virtually in hibernation.

## **National Surveys**

20. Following the World Fertility Survey in 1996, we have had many national level surveys such as Nepal Contraceptive Prevalence Survey in 1981; Migration survey, 1983; Demographic Sample Survey, 1986/87; Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey, 1991; Nepal Family Health Survey in 1996 and a series of DHS 2001, 2006 and 2010/2011; Nepal Migration, Employment and Birth Death and Contraception Survey, 1996, three rounds of Nepal living Standard Surveys, 1995/1996, 2003/2004, 2010/2011; two rounds of Nepal Labor Force Surveys 1998/1999 and 2008; Nepal Adolescents and Youth Survey, 2012.

## **Communicating Statistics**

21. There is no viable communication between data producers, users and stakeholders.
22. Politicians and senior policy-makers have neither time nor interest to struggle through lengthy and dense technical reports. They lack the ability to link data and statistics to policy objectives and strategies.
23. Politicians do not necessarily understand the difference between numbers and rates, between rates and ratios, and between estimates and projections.
24. Many statistics are already dated by the time they get released.
25. There is an urgent need for country' commitment to address challenges for integrating population and development policies through an efficient and effective functioning of its national statistical system.

## **Agenda Beyond 2015**

26. The post 2015 agenda must be that no one will be left behind from the process of inclusive development. It must address the universal demand that every pregnancy is wanted, every child is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.
27. Our demographic community must get out of the traditional ways of thinking about population and realize that we have already entered a new phase of demographic maturity, sub-replacement fertility, advanced aging and population implosion.
28. There is an urgent need for addressing the problems of gender inequality, empowering women, eradicating violence against women and children, reducing poverty, promoting social justice and security and safe migration to make Nepal as the best place to live on Earth. If you want to go fast, walk alone; if you want to go further, we better go together.

Thank You!