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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

12-14 January 2004  
Geneva, Switzerland

**REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN POPULATION FORUM 2004**

A. Attendance and organisation of work

1. The European Population Forum 2004 was a high-level expert meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 12-14 January 2004. Hosted by the Swiss Government, the Forum was jointly organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Swiss Government, in particular the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, plus the UNFPA provided financial support for the organisation of the Forum. The International Planned Parenthood Federation - European Network (IPPF-EN) in Brussels, Belgium, and the International Foundation for Population and Development (IFPD) in Lausanne, Switzerland, provided additional support. A group of experts, the Advisory Group, assisted the organisers.

2. The Forum was held within the context of the decennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994. The theme of the Forum was "Population Challenges and Policy Responses". Among other things, it considered important, newly emerging population changes, examined the challenges they pose and identified best policy responses to them. In this context, the Forum examined the implementation of the ICPD-related regional and global agreements

of the 1990s in the UNECE region, particularly for countries in transition. It also considered how the region can further the implementation of these agreements in the future.

3. The Forum was opened by Ambassador Walter Fust, Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, on behalf of the Government of Switzerland. During the opening session the Forum heard statements by Mrs. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA; Mrs. Brigita Schmögnerová, Executive Secretary, UNECE; Mr. Poul Nielson, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid of the European Commission; and Mr. John Murray, Head, Social Policy Department on behalf of the Council of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

4. Experts from the executive and legislative branches of government, academic and research institutes and the private sector from the following UNECE member States took part in the Forum: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States and Uzbekistan.

5. Experts of the following United Nations departments, specialised agencies, organisations and joint programmes attended the Forum: the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Migration Policy Programme (IMP), the United Nations International Institute on Ageing (INIA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Bank, and the World Health Organisation's headquarters and the Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO).

6. The Forum was attended by experts of the following intergovernmental organisations: the Council of Europe, the European Commission of the European Union, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

7. The Forum was also attended by experts from the following international and national foundations and non-governmental organisations: Actinvest International, Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), Armenian Charitable Foundation on Population Development, Associação para o Planeamento da Família (Portugal), Austrian Family Planning Organization, Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association (BFPA), Catholics for a Free Choice, Centre for Health and Gender Equity-Change

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<sup>1</sup> Copies are available from the Forum website: <http://www.unece.org/pau/epf/>

(USA), Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Commonwealth Medical Trust (Commat), Danish Family Planning Association, Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW), Ecole Supérieure de Travail Social (ESTS/IES), Equilibres et Populations (France), European Forum on Population Ageing, European Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (Netherlands), Family Care International (FCI, USA), Family Federation of Finland, Family Planning Association of Armenia, Family Planning Association of Turkey, Family Planning Association (United Kingdom), Federacion de Planificacion Familiar de España, Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland), Flemish Centre for Services and Expertise with regard to Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS, Gender and Development NGO (Tajikistan), Georgian Planned Parenthood Federation, German National Committee of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), Groupe Intermigra, IAMENEH, Interact Worldwide (United Kingdom), International Advocacy, International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health, International Centre for Migration and Health (ICMH, Switzerland), International Catholic Migration Commission, International Foundation for Population and Development (IFPD), International Ecology and Health Fund (ECOSAN, Uzbekistan), International Family Health, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN), Irish Family Planning Association, Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS), Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP<sup>2</sup>), Kazakhstan Association on Reproductive Health, Latvia's Association of Family Planning and Sexual Health "Papardes Ziedis" (LAFPSH), Marie Stopes International, Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial (France), National Centre of Problems of Healthy Style of Life (Kazakhstan), Network Public Health Program, NGO Committee on Ageing, Open Society Institute (USA), PLANeS, Swiss Foundation for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Population Action International, Population Institute (USA), Pro-Familia Germany, Reproductive Health of Adolescents NGO (Tajikistan), Romanian NGO Coalition for Reproductive Health, Rotarian Fellowship for Population and Development, Rotary International, Russian Family Planning Association, Sensoa (Belgium), SOCIOUS (Moldova), Swedish Association for Sex Education (RFSU), Swiss Society for Gerontology, "You Act", Youth Coalition (Canada), Youth Group, World Population Foundation (Netherlands), Zonta International and Uzbek Association on Reproductive Health (UARH).

8. In addition, members of the Permanent Missions of Canada, Denmark, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and the Holy See were present during the Forum.

9. A complete list of participants is contained in Annex I: List of participants.

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<sup>2</sup> Japan is a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations (ESCAP).

## B. Agenda

10. The agenda of the Forum (ECE/AC.27/2004/1) was as follows:
- a). Opening
  - b). Keynote addresses: “Population and development in Europe during the last decade”
  - c). Thematic session 1: “Global population and development trends: the European view
  - d). Thematic session 2: “Childbearing and parenting in low fertility countries: enabling choices”
  - e). Thematic session 3: “Morbidity, mortality and reproductive health: facing challenges in transition countries”
  - f). Thematic session 4: “International migration: promoting management and integration”
  - g). Keynote addresses: Policy challenges of Europe’s demographic changes: cross-cutting issues”
  - h). Closing

## C. Chairpersons of the Forum

11. The Government of Switzerland was the overall Chair of the Forum. The session chairpersons were as follows:

- a). Opening: Ambassador Walter Fust  
Director General  
Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation
- b). Keynote addresses: “Population and development in Europe during the last decade” Mrs. Thoraya A. Obaid  
Executive Director  
UNFPA
- c). Thematic session 1: Global population and development trends: the European view Ambassador Walter Fust  
Director General, Swiss Agency for  
Development and Cooperation
- d). Thematic session 2: “Childbearing and parenting in low fertility countries: enabling choices” Dr. Steven Sinding  
Director General  
International Planned Parenthood  
Federation (IPPF)

- e). Thematic session 3: Morbidity, mortality and reproductive health: facing challenges in transition countries  
Mrs. Lynette Lowndes  
Head, European Department  
Federation of Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Societies
- f). Thematic session 4: “International migration: promoting management and integration”  
Mr. Gervais Appave  
Director  
Migration Policy and Research  
International Organization for  
Migration (IOM)
- g). Keynote addresses: Policy challenges of Europe’s demographic changes: cross-cutting issues  
Mrs. Janina Jozwiak  
President  
European Association for  
Population Studies (EAPS)
- h). Closing  
Mrs. Thoraya A. Obaid  
Executive Director  
UNFPA

#### D. Review of Substantive Themes

12. The Forum reviewed the substantive issues on the agenda (items 3-6) on the basis of background documents<sup>3</sup>, presentations by experts at the thematic sessions followed by an open debate<sup>4</sup>. The list of background documents is contained in Annex II and details on the thematic sessions are presented in Annex III.

#### E. General Debate and Summary of Obligations

13. On the basis of the background documents, the presentations at the thematic sessions and observations made by participants, a draft Closing Statement on the results of the Forum was prepared by the Secretariat assisted by a group of experts, the “friends of the Chair”, selected from among specialists from governments and NGOs. On the basis of the Closing Statement a more detailed “Summary of the Deliberations” was prepared.

14. Immediately following the second keynote session, Mr. Werner Haug, Director of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, on behalf of the Government of Switzerland as Chair

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<sup>3</sup> Background documents and other information on the Forum was available before the Forum at the Forum website: <http://www.unece.org/pau/epf/>

<sup>4</sup> Presentations by panellists and observations made by participants during the debate are posted on the Forum website: <http://www.unece.org/pau/epf/>

of the Forum, made an oral presentation of the Closing Statement on the results of the Forum (See Annex IV).

15. The Forum was informed that thanks to the good offices of the Government of Switzerland, the Summary of the Deliberations would be forwarded to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for consideration.

16. The Forum was informed that in addition to the Summary of the Deliberations, a formal report (ECE/AC.27/2004/2) and proceedings of the meeting would be prepared by the Secretariat and distributed.

17. During the closing session the Forum heard statements by: Mrs. Adelheid Bürgi-Schmelz, Director General, Swiss Federal Statistical Office; Mr. Steven Sinding, Director General, IPPF; Mr. Jérôme Vignon, Director, Social Protection and Social Integration, DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission; Ms. Janina Jozwiak, President, EAPS; Mrs Ruth Genner, President, Inter-European Parliamentarian Forum on Population and Development; Mr. Miroslav Macura, Chief, PAU on behalf of the Executive Secretary of UNECE; and Mrs. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA.

18. Mrs. Thoraya A. Obaid closed the Forum.

## **Annex I: List of participants**

### **INVITED EXPERTS**

#### **ALBANIA**

Mrs. Valentina Leskaj  
Member of Parliament

Mr. Armand Skapi  
Director, International Organizations  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **ARMENIA**

Mrs. Gayane Avagyan  
Obstetric-Gynecologist  
State Medical University

Mr. Albert Khachatryan  
President  
Armenian Charitable Foundation on Population  
Development

#### **AUSTRIA**

**Mr. Richard Gisser**  
Vice Director  
Vienna Institute of Demography  
Austrian Academy of Sciences

**Ms. Ursula Haubner**  
State Secretary for Families, Generations and  
Consumer Protection  
Austrian Academy of Sciences Consumer Protection  
Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations

**Ms. Elisabeth Hlavac**  
Member of Parliament

**Mr. Walter Lichem**  
Director  
Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs

**Mr. Bernd Marin**  
Executive Director  
U.N: European Centre for Social  
Welfare Policy and Research

**Mrs. Elisabeth Pracht**  
Executive Director  
Family Planning Association

#### **AZERBAIJAN**

**Ms. Malahat Hasanova**  
Member of Parliament

#### **BELARUS**

**Ms. Galina Butovskaya**  
Head  
Division of Humanitarian Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Ms. Irina Chutkova**  
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

**Ms. Galina Hasuk**  
First Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Statistics and Analysis

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Specialist in Reproductive Health  
Department of Reproductive Health  
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Inter European Parliamentary Forum on Federation -  
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Project Secretary  
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

**Mr. Ronald C. Schoenmaeckers**  
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of the Flemish Community in Belgium

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European Parliament

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Executive Director  
Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health  
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**Mr. Nikola Vassilev**  
Chair  
National Committee on Reproductive Health

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Senator

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Central European Forum for Migration Research  
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President, International Geographical Union  
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**Mr. Carles Campuzano I Canadés**  
Member of Parliament for Barcelona  
Regional Parliament of Catalonia

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**Mr. Victor Bernhardt**

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**Mr. Lennarth Hjelmåker**

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Department for Global Development  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

**Mrs. Katarina Lindahl**

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Swedish Association for Sex Education

**SWITZERLAND**

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**Prof. Hans Bossart**

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**Annex II:  
List of background documents**

**Thematic session 1: Global population and development trends: the European view**

- 1.1 Vicky Claeys and Eef Wuyts  
The DAC watch compilation. an overview of donors' performance in sexual and reproductive health and rights
- 1.2 Joerg Maas and Christian Resch  
Population and reproductive health issues in the ECE region: the political scene
- 1.3 Tomas Frejka  
UNFPA field inquiry for the UNECE region

**Thematic session 2: Childbearing and parenting in low fertility countries: enabling choices**

- 2.1 Francesco Billari  
Choices, opportunities and constraints on partnership, childbearing and parenting: the patterns
- 2.2 Anne H. Gauthier  
Choices, opportunities and constraints on partnership, childbearing and parenting: the policy responses

**Thematic session 3: Morbidity, mortality and reproductive health: facing challenges in transition countries**

- 3.1 Ellen Nolte, Martin McKee, Anna Gilmore  
Morbidity and mortality in transition countries in the European context
- 3.2 Florina Serbanescu, Howard Goldberg and Leo Morris  
Reproductive health in transition countries in the European context

**Thematic session 4: International migration: promoting management and integration**

- 4.1 Thomas K. Bauer, John P. Haisken-DeNew, and Christoph M. Schmidt  
International labour migration, economic growth and labour markets: the dynamics of interrelationships
- 4.2 Rinus Pennix  
Integration of migrants: economic, social, cultural and political dimensions

**Annex III:  
Details of keynote addresses and thematic sessions**

**Keynote addresses: “Population and development in Europe during the last decade”, Chair: Ms. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA**

Speakers: Mr. David Coleman, Professor of Demography, University of Oxford  
Ms. Ursula Haubner, Secretary of State, Federal Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection, Austria

**Thematic session discussion: Global population and development trends: the European view”, Chair: Ambassador Walter Fust, Director General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**

Panellists: Ms. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund, New York, USA

Mr. Karel van Kesteren, Director, UN and International Financial Institutions, Ministry for Development Cooperation, Netherlands

Dr. Wolfgang Bichmann, Vice President, KfW Development Bank, Germany

Dr. Aikan Akanov, Director General, National Centre of Problems of Healthy Style of Life, Kazakhstan

Ms. Jill Sheffield, President, Family Care International, New York, United States

**Thematic session discussion: “Childbearing and parenting in low fertility countries: enabling choices”, Chair: Mr. Steven Sinding, Director General, International Planned Parenthood Federation**

Panellists: Ms. Anne Gauthier, Professor in Comparative Public Policy, University of Calgary, Canada

Mr. Christian Jacob, Secretary for the Family, Ministry of Health, Family and Older Persons, France

Ms. Arni Hole, Director General, Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway

Ms. Nada Stropnik, Senior Researcher, Institute for Economic Research, Slovenia

Ms. Christine McCafferty, Member of Parliament, House of Commons, United Kingdom

**Thematic session discussion: “Morbidity, mortality and reproductive health: facing challenges in transition countries”, Chair: Ms. Lynette Lowndes, Head, European Department, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

Panellists: Ms. Valentina Leskaj, Member of Parliament, Albania

Ms. Ellen Nolte, Lecturer in Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Mr. Vladimir Shkolnikov, Head, Data Laboratory, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Germany

Dr. Gunta Lazdane, Regional Adviser, Reproductive Health and Research, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Denmark

Mr. Dominic Haazen, Health Program Team Leader, World Bank, Latvia Office

**Thematic session discussion: “International migration: promoting management and integration”, Chair: Mr. Gervais Appave, Director, Migration Policy and Research, International Organization for Migration**

Panellists: Mr. Peter J. Van Krieken, Special Advisor, Ministry of Justice, Netherlands

Mr. Martin Baldwin-Edwards, Co-Director, Mediterranean Migration Observatory, Greece

Mr. Jonas Widgren, Director General, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Austria

Ms. Rosaline Frith, Director General, Integration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada

Mr. Dominik Langenbacher, Delegate for Migration Dialogue, Federal Office for Refugees, Switzerland

**Keynote addresses: “Policy challenges of Europe’s demographic changes: crosscutting issues“, Chair: Ms. Janina Jozwiak, President, European Association of Population Studies**

Speakers: Mr. Jérôme Vignon, Director, Social Protection and Social Integration, DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, Belgium

Mr. Paul Demeny, Distinguished Scholar, Population Council, United States

**Annex IV:**  
**Closing statement on the results by the Forum Presidency**  
Presented by Werner Haug, Switzerland  
**14 January 2004**

1. Keeping up commitments–facing new challenges
  - The meeting has shown a strong commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action throughout the ECE region
  - The Forum recognized the diversity of national circumstances and the continued high relevance of the Cairo Agenda for the ECE region, together with other plans, e.g., the Berlin ECE Action Plan on Ageing
  - We recognise the rights of all individuals and couples, in particular young people, to a healthy sexual and reproductive life and to emphasize their role as important actors
  - HIV/AIDS continues to be an urgent priority for every part of the ECE region, and we recognize the necessity to integrate HIV prevention and treatment programmes fully within sexual and reproductive health programmes
  - We noted that pledges for Cairo were never fully met, and that additional resources are now required for international assistance and for domestic implementation–within the context of new approaches for ODA funding
  - The Forum stressed the importance of ensuring the coherence of our work with other international development strategies, for example, the Health Sector Reform, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Millennium Development Goals
2. Enabling choices for low fertility contexts
  - Low fertility is clearly a major policy concern for the region and an increasing number of governments are addressing the issue but no conclusion was reached on how to resolve it.
  - However, we also learned that approaches to low fertility that do not protect and respect rights and choices will not provide a solution to population decline.
  - The Forum participants raised the importance of removing a wide range of barriers for men and women to freely decide on their parenting status.
  - We also learned about the importance of creating national policies that are enabling and supportive--and we heard several examples from the region which we can learn from, including models of increasing male responsibility for parenting and expanded participation of older persons
  - The Forum recognised the variety of family structures and trends in their development.

- We noted that fertility levels remain stable when there are high levels of gender equality in the economy, family and society and where partnering arrangements are accommodated and there is a tolerance for diversity in family forms and living arrangements.
- The Forum noted that there is a clear nexus between welfare state policies and trends in family formation and fertility. Policies in the region need to combine macro and micro strategies, to include gender equality as a priority and respect individual rights and freedoms.

3. Addressing the health divide in the ECE region

Common concerns for the whole region:

- There are dramatic and unacceptable differences in life expectancy within the ECE region--mortality levels in its eastern part are endangering economic and social development.
- We noted large intra-national differences for socially excluded, migrant and vulnerable populations.
- Widespread trafficking of human beings continues throughout the ECE region as well as gender-based violence.
- The whole region is facing increasing incidence of STIs and HIV/AIDS.
- We noted that there is a limited awareness of and support for public health policies and approaches.
- We demonstrated the need to increase funding, share best practices, strengthen NGOs and mobilise local efforts.

Priority concerns in the Eastern ECE:

- These countries face weakened health care infrastructures and restricted access to quality health care.
- They also experience inequality, poverty, collapse of support systems and environmental degradation.
- There is increasing ill-health due to strong dependence--particularly of male adults--on tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs combined with poor diet.
- These populations have limited access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, particularly contraception and safe abortion, where they are legal.
- Combined with the above, there is a deterioration of statistical data and monitoring systems

and the ability to better understand these developments.

4. Reaping the benefits of migration

- The Forum recognises that the migration context has considerably changed since Cairo. International migration affects all countries of the region: it is growing, becoming more diverse and is increasingly perceived as an important resource in a global world.
- There is a contradiction between social and economic reality and policies of control. While it is recognised that immigration is becoming a necessity for social, demographic and economic reasons, some present-day migration policies, largely based on control and repression, are inefficient in managing migration in a positive way.
- Comprehensive approaches toward migration management are urgently needed. This means that migration policies should cover all aspects and types of migration (refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, family reunification, etc); take into account humanitarian as well as economic dimensions and include admission criteria as well as integration and co-operation with countries of origin.
- Immigration policies need to be defined explicitly and be more transparent.
- Migration and integration policies will have maximum impact if they are co-ordinated at the local, national and regional levels and if all stakeholders, including the immigrant groups themselves, participate in the conception, implementation and monitoring of migration and integration policies.
- Integration policies should include more open criteria of eligibility for nationhood and citizenship.
- There is a contradiction between the fact that international migration is a global phenomenon and that the nation state has a paramount role. Multilateral agreements are needed to put migration into a regional framework.

5. Promoting policy consistency, knowledge, partnership and advocacy

- The Forum recognised the need to improve the analysis and evidence-based knowledge for comprehensive policies;
- Conference participants wanted to address the quality of statistical data and the under-funding of surveys and monitoring systems;
- We tried to clarify the role of states and governments as defining goals, representing the public interest, increasing transparency and accountability, setting policy and regulatory frameworks and improving their coherence;
- The Forum noted the importance of a positive environment to enable partnerships between states, local governance, civil society, communities and the private sector;

- We recognised the importance of an expanded policy dialogue for political commitment to implementation of strategies and plans for sustainable development;
- Conference participants noted the need to strengthen regional partnerships for achieving ICPD and MDG principles and goals within the ECE and the world.