

STATEMENT OF UNFPA REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ALANNA ARMITAGE
CLOSING CEREMONY
UNECE ICPD +25 REGIONAL CONFERENCE.
GENEVA, OCTOBER 2, 2018

Thank you Madame Chair

Madame Executive Secretary of UNECE,

Excellencies

Distinguished participants,

Dear colleagues,

We came to this conference to re-commit; to review, and to chart a path forward for the ICPD in this region, in the SDG era.

I can only say how grateful we are at UNFPA to have listened to your guidance, your experiences and your voices.

The overwhelming view of the conference is indeed a **clear recognition of the continued relevance and value** of the ICPD Programme of Action, and a **renewed commitment to what it stands for**.

I take this opportunity to say a special thank you to our co-chairs:

- Minister Kostevich of the Republic of Belarus,
- Ambassador Kostadinova of Bulgaria and
- Ambassador McCarney of Canada,

who have lead us through these 2 days with great skill, and facilitated such an interactive and substantive conference.

Let me thank all our speakers and panelists for a truly inspiring set of contributions.

I would also make a special acknowledgement to the UNECE and Mrs Algayerova. Our close partnership is exceptional the work and leadership of Lidia Bratanova, Vitalija Gaucaite and their teams has made a real difference on how we support member states in implementing this conference and the ICPD.

Thank you also to all the others who made this conference a success – rapporteurs, interpreters

And above all, you the participants who so actively engaged.

Distinguished delegates,

In reviewing your progress, through the review report and your statements, you clearly have much to celebrate. Your success is our success.

One of the highlights for me has been to be reminded of the incredible knowledge we have in the region within countries, civil society and academia.

Moreover, the openness to discuss complex issues, the willingness for all countries in this very diverse region -- from Vancouver to Vladivostok -- to offer to share their experiences, has been really powerful.

It underlines a hopefulness for solidarity among we the peoples in this ECE region.

As UNFPA, we commit to continue supporting that sharing of knowledge and searching for innovative solutions and to work with the broadest possible array of partners in order to harness the power of evidence, technology, personal stories, and new narratives.

Ladies and Gentleman

In setting out your vision for ICPD going forward, you have called for clear linkages with the SDGs. You have welcomed the Monitoring Framework. You have embraced the call to leave no-one behind.

And while, as Professor Lutz said in our opening panel, the word “demography” does not appear in the SDGs, you all have recognized that population dynamics – and **people** - are of course at the heart of the 2030 agenda.

We, as UNFPA, commit to supporting you to sustain the paradigm shift from human numbers to human rights, including support for gathering and using data, and supporting the linkages with human rights mechanisms and the SDGs.

Finally, in this year of anniversaries – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights@70, the ICPD +25 – and our honouring of Older Persons yesterday, I am inspired by the view of this conference that our agenda is inclusive of all, throughout the life course.

There is clearly an extraordinary energy within this region to “make inequality and social exclusion a part of history (as one MS so eloquently put it moments ago)

and we call on all stakeholders to do all that can be done for a more **equal**, more **inclusive, inter-generational, inter-sectoral**, life for all, where everyone’s voice is heard.

With great pride and gratitude, we as UNFPA recommit to supporting you translate that vision into action and overcoming the “flaw of averages” to enable rights and choices for all

I thank you most sincerely for this historic moment.