

**STATEMENT by Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division,
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First Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,
Montevideo, Uruguay, 12-15 August 2013

Mr./Madam Chair, Distinguished delegates and colleagues,
Es un gran honor dirigirme a ustedes hoy día,

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, or DESA, has maintained a long-standing and fruitful collaboration on population and development issues with CELADE / ECLAC. This history of close collaboration pre-dates the UN system-wide preparations that led, in 1994, to the negotiation and adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt.

I am very pleased that, almost 20 years after the Cairo conference, the Population Divisions of DESA and ECLAC continue to collaborate closely and most effectively in this domain.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate our colleagues from ECLAC for their excellent work in producing the two comprehensive and detailed documents presented at this Conference: one on the review and lessons learned about implementation of the ICPD in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the other on a proposed regional agenda on population and development beyond 2014.

Secondly, I am glad to report that the Population Division has been collaborating with the UNFPA and other United Nations entities in the preparations for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on ICPD Beyond 2014, scheduled to take place in September 2014. We look forward to working with ECLAC, as well as the other regional commissions, in the preparations and deliberations of that Special Session.

Also, the Population Division, in its role of Secretariat of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), is supporting the Bureau, Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Gonzalo Koncke of Uruguay, in the preparations for the 47th session of the CPD, which will take place in New York in April of 2014.

Next year's session of the Commission on Population and Development will be dedicated precisely to an *Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD* at the global scale. Therefore, the conclusions and recommendations resulting from this regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean will be most relevant for the CPD of next year.

As the working documents for this conference clearly show, there will be a number of important challenges facing the populations of Latin America and the Caribbean in the years beyond 2014, including the needs of children, youth, older persons, indigenous people and Afro-descendants. Areas of special concern include the continued pursuit of gender equity, the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, and the protection of the population against environmental threats.

At the same time, the long and rich experience of the LAC region in the population field can provide useful lessons for other developing regions. Let me mention two points in this regard. The transition to low mortality and fertility in Latin America and the Caribbean started earlier than in many other parts of the developing world. Over the course of this transition, the countries of the region have entertained a range of population policies, with varying degrees of success. In addition, the LAC region is much more urbanized than other major developing regions, and thus can offer examples of best practices to countries in other parts of the world that are now undergoing rapid transitions to predominantly urban societies.

Thirdly, I would like to point out that the plans for ICPD beyond 2014 and the inclusion of population dynamics in the post-2015 development agenda should converge, and be broadly consistent. In this context, I would like to put forth for consideration of this Conference that the Global Consultation on Population Dynamics in the post-2015 Development Agenda and the UN Technical Support Team for sustainable development goals have identified the following priority areas with regard to population dynamics:

1. Investing in human capital throughout the life course. Such investment is a critical element for developing countries to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend and to produce sustainable

social protection systems in situations of low fertility and ageing populations, as is the case for many countries of the LAC region.

2. Seizing the development benefits of migration. This includes ensuring the rights and safety of migrants, combating discrimination against them, and harnessing the individual and societal benefits of migration for sending and receiving countries. These objectives can be achieved by developing national policies on migration, by strengthening bilateral, regional and global partnerships on migration, and by lowering the various costs of migration, including transfer costs for remittances. Some countries of the LAC region have made significant progress in this area, but additional efforts are needed.

3. Creating equitable, liveable and sustainable cities. This can be achieved by leveraging the advantages of agglomeration, by managing urban growth and by promoting the sustainable development of rural communities, while strengthening the linkages between rural and urban areas. The innovative approaches to sustainable urban planning that have been applied in Brazil, Chile and Colombia, among others, are noteworthy in this regard.

4. Strengthening national capacities to collect, use and analyze population data and projections. As emphasized in the Outcome document of the Rio+20 conference, a people-centred development strategy must systematically consider changes in the number, age and location of people. Population estimates and projections, disaggregated by age, sex and geographical location, are critical for informing and monitoring development goals, targets and indicators, as well as policies and programmes.

To conclude, I would like to confirm that DESA — through the Population Division, the Statistics Division and the Division for Social Policy and Development, among others — will continue to collaborate with ECLAC and with national governments of the LAC region in various activities in the area of population and development, a topic on which I will elaborate during the Inter-agency panel scheduled for this Thursday afternoon.

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair

Muchas gracias señor(a) Presidente