

Statement
on behalf of the
Federal Republic of Germany

at the

UNECE Regional conference
Enabling Choices:
Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development
on
1-2 October 2018

(Agenda item: Member States' statements on national progress
towards implementing the ICPD Programme of Action)

Mr Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the German delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNECE and UNFPA for the comprehensive preparation of the conference. Both the Monitoring Framework and Regional Report are important documents for the recurring and systematic evaluation of regional and national progress on the ICPD programme of action. They will play a major role in advancing the implementation of both the programme and the SDGs.

Current population trends create challenges also for Germany. Germany's demographic policy is aimed at creating the necessary conditions to increase prosperity for all generations in our country and further improve the quality of life.

While we cannot stop demographic change, we can plan for the potential effects. Germany adopted its first demographic strategy in 2012 and developed it further in 2015. Beyond mere socioeconomic aspects, it includes various areas of life with a particular emphasis on social cohesion and active participation of all generations. An important goal is to promote equivalent living conditions and a high quality of life in rural and urban areas differently affected by demographic change.

On this basis, Germany has made considerable progress in all three major areas since the latest Regional Conference and the adoption of the chair's summary.

For example, in 2015 the Federal Government initiated a programme to preserve rural regions as attractive and vital living areas. To this end, innovative approaches to rural development will be tested. In 2017, 55 million euros were available for these efforts.

Giving mothers and fathers the opportunity to combine parental allowance and part-time work has made it easier for them to balance family and career obligations. In addition, the number of child day-care centres has been substantially increased.

Another important topic for Germany in the area of health and population policy is realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights. We strongly advocate a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to family planning and comprehensive sexuality education, including sexual orientation and gender diversity. This will ensure that every person is able to decide freely whom to

marry, how many children to have and how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

For instance, through the initiative on “Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health”, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has supported more than 30 partner countries in expanding the use of and access to modern family planning methods and services, including contraceptives.

The Cairo Programme of Action guides our work. Germany reaffirms its strong support for the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of its review conferences.

When it comes to inequalities, social inclusion and rights, Germany has further developed its policies on persons with disabilities on the basis of the relevant UN Convention: The national action plan was revised in consultation with civil society in 2016. The action plan includes many measures aimed at creating an inclusive society in all areas, for example by promoting inclusive housing for elderly people with disabilities.

Demographic change is challenging not only for Germany but for all UNECE countries. Different regions will be affected in different ways. Together, member states can share and develop strategies that ensure prosperity, a good quality of life, fair participation and social cohesion. For Germany, this type of cooperation is crucial: We are happy to share information and encourage all member states to work with us.

Thank you for your attention.