

Statement of behalf of Norway
Commission on Population and Development
Forty-first session

Agenda Item 5: Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population
Wednesday 9 April 2008

Mr Chairman,

On behalf of Norway I would like to congratulate the Population Division for its excellent work. It is hard to imagine what we would have done without the high-quality estimates, projections and analyses coming regularly from the Population Division.

I would also like to take this opportunity to comment on the report on the monitoring of the world population. The report presents very important results on urbanization trends and their economic, social and demographic implications. In addition, however, it would have been useful with a discussion of the important term 'urbanization': What it means and how it is defined and measured.

The 2007 Revision of the World Urbanization Prospects, which has been made available in the back of the room, includes information about the data sources and definitions for each country. This shows that the definition of urbanization varies tremendously, from 200 persons for the Nordic countries to 20 000 persons for Nigeria and other countries. For many countries there is no definition by size, only administrative designations. This reduces the value of comparative analyses. At the same time this is unavoidable, as data are collected according to national definitions.

I would, therefore, encourage the Population Division to reflect in future reports a wider discussion of definitions and data problems. I would also encourage the Division to look at ways of improving urbanization estimates. At the side meeting yesterday satellite imagery was mentioned as a possible method for collecting data on urbanization. This could be one way to go.

Let me finish by again complimenting the Population Division for doing a very good job, given its limited resources and the difficult data situation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman