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Sustained economic growth is a necessary condition for reducing poverty and hunger, particularly in the least developed countries. In other less developed countries, where average income levels are higher, policies to improve income distribution would also make a key contribution to reducing poverty and hunger.

Recent evidence has shown that changes in the age structure, resulting from significant declines in fertility, may lead to a substantial “demographic dividend” if appropriate economic and fiscal policies are adopted to take advantage of the increase in the proportion of the population in the working ages relative to that of children. Today, the countries with high fertility and high rates of population growth tend to be those with high rates of poverty and hunger and low rates of economic growth. In the least developed countries, nearly 40 per cent of the population is under age 15. Although the desired number of children in these countries remains relatively high, the number of children women have surpasses the number desired, and fertility levels have started to decline in some of the least developed countries. In countries where the transition to low fertility is just starting, implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, including expanded access to family planning services, is expected to help speed up the demographic transition and give rise to the demographic dividend.

Because the MDGs are mutually reinforcing, achievement of MDGs 2 to 4—pertaining to education, child health and mortality, and gender equality—will facilitate the reduction of poverty and hunger. These MDG goals correspond closely to goals contained in the ICPD Programme of Action. Improvement of educational attainment and child health would increase human capital and thus labour productivity, which would help increase incomes and therefore reduce poverty and hunger. Similarly, the empowerment of women would allow, among other things, to increase their earning potential and their power to negotiate for better distribution of resources within the household.

The ICPD Programme of Action recognizes the impact that international migration can have on development. Since the ICPD was convened in 1994, remittances from international migrants have risen to become the second largest source of foreign exchange for developing countries, following foreign direct investment, and they amount to more than double the current levels of official development assistance. Remittances can play a role in reducing poverty in the countries of origin of migrants.

Both the ICPD Programme of Action and MDG 2 call for achieving universal primary education. The Programme of Action also stresses that there should be universal access to quality education, with particular priority given to primary and technical education and job training. That is, full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action would entail the attainment of MDG 2.

Rapid population growth is an obstacle to the achievement of universal primary education in many developing countries, especially the least developed. Although developing countries have often succeeded in increasing enrolment ratios in the face of rapid growth of the school-age population, this achievement has typically meant significant increases in class sizes and student/teacher ratios, effectively reducing the quality of education received. Reductions of population growth brought

The ICPD Programme of Action emphasizes the need to develop policies for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and the key actions for its further implementation urge Governments to ensure that HIV prevalence among persons aged 15-24 is reduced globally both in the short and in the longer run, a goal that is very similar to MDG 6. Achieving this goal would contribute to the achievement of other MDGs, including the reduction of poverty (MDG 1), the reduction of child mortality (MDG 4) and the reduction of maternal mortality (MDG 5). Conversely, as long as the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to expand, it undermines achievement of other development goals. HIV/AIDS draws both public and private resources away from other development activities and depletes household incomes, thus impairing the achievement of other MDGs, including the reduction of hunger (MDG 1). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has identified HIV/AIDS as a major threat to the achievement of food security because the disease is depleting the agricultural labour force in the most affected developing countries.

The ICPD Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation identify a range of practical measures to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. These include providing information and education to raise awareness and emphasize behavioural change; providing sex education and information to both sexes, including adolescents; promoting responsible sexual behaviour, including voluntary sexual abstinence; making widely available affordable condoms and drugs for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections; and taking action to control the quality of blood products and to ensure decontamination of equipment. The Programme of Action further recommends making information, education and counselling for responsible sexual behaviour and effective prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, integral components of all reproductive and sexual-health services and facilitating the distribution of condoms through those services. These measures would contribute significantly to the control of the epidemic.

The objective of ensuring environmental sustainab

the MDG 7, target 11.

The ICPD Programme of Action addresses all the issues identified in the targets for MDG 8 but does not provide quantitative goals. The Programme of Action recognizes the importance of international cooperation in the implementation of population and development programmes. It urges the international community to continue to promote a supportive economic environment, particularly for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in their attempts to achieve sustained economic growth by promoting an open, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory and predictable international trading system, promoting foreign direct investment, reducing the debt burden, providing new and additional financial resources from all available funding sources and mechanisms, and promoting access to technologies (MDG8, targets 12, 15 and 18).

The Programme of Action also urges Governments and the private sector to facilitate job creation in the industrial, agricultural and service sectors. Countries are urged to aim at meeting the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in the areas of formal and non-formal education, training and employment opportunities (MDG 8, target 16).

Through technology transfer, the Programme of Action calls for assisting developing countries in building their capacity to produce generic drugs for the domestic market and to ensure the wide availability and accessibility of such drugs (MDG 8, target 17). The Programme of Action recognizes the importance of communication technologies such as globally interlinked telephone, television and data transmission networks and new multimedia technologies in helping to bridge the geographical, social and economic gaps that exist in access to information around the world (MDG 8, target 18).

The Millennium Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action share the objective of achieving an inclusive and equitable global development. In this regard, the ICPD Programme of Action provides detailed guidance and measures conducive to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. In doing so, the Programme of Action devotes special attention to the more vulnerable and underserved population groups, including the poor in rural and urban areas, the aged and indigenous populations. The Programme of Action also discusses in some detail the differing roles and responsibilities of national Governments, international cooperation, and partnerships with the non-governmental sector in the implementation of its recommendations.

The goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action are not directed exclusively to developing countries. The Programme of Action addresses population issues from an overarching perspective, so that its recommendations for action are relevant in a wide range of contexts, with some measures applying mainly to the least developed countries, others applicable to the rest of the developing countries and yet others to developed countries.

The ICPD Programme of Action also devotes attention to the data and research requirements needed to monitor and evaluate the progress made in attaining its goals and objectives, including those that match or reinforce the MDGs. The Programme of Action recognizes that valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant and internationally comparable data form the basis for policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and recommends strengthening national capacity to seek new information and meet the need for basic data collection, analysis and dissemination.

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