



COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages

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Contribution from the 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development

The 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) focused on “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”. This theme aligned with the overarching theme of the 2025 ECOSOC session, “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for leaving no one behind”. In particular, the Commission’s deliberations will support the in-depth reviews of SDG 3 (good health and well-being) and SDG 5 (gender equality) during the forthcoming high-level political forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC.

This note summarizes key findings, core messages and recommendations from the session that are relevant to discussions at the 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. These insights are based on reports of the Secretary-General prepared as inputs to the session and on contributions from Member States, NGOs, UN entities and invited speakers during the session.

1. Assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.

Throughout the session, speakers highlighted the importance of addressing multiple and interlinked crises, ranging from health emergencies and economic instability to climate change and conflict, through integrated and people-centred approaches. These crises have disrupted essential services and data systems, with significant impacts on health outcomes, including increased levels of maternal mortality, particularly in fragile contexts. Climate change further exacerbates these challenges, affecting health and development especially in vulnerable populations.

The Commission was informed by the report of the Secretary-General on the special theme of the session¹, which highlighted that between 2000 and 2023, an estimated 24.7 million deaths globally were linked to various types of crises. The COVID-19 pandemic alone accounted for nearly 18.5 million deaths, or 75 per cent of the total, during 2020-2023. Other crises, such as natural disasters, conflicts, and epidemics, also contributed to the death toll. Armed conflicts caused approximately 3.7 million deaths globally, with significant numbers in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, and Syria. Natural disasters resulted in about 2.4 million deaths, with droughts, cyclones, floods, and earthquakes being the major contributors. Least developed countries and small island developing States faced a disproportionate share of these crisis-related deaths.

¹ E/CN.9/2025/2



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Given the theme of this session of the Commission, the assessment of the impacts of multiple and interconnected crises focuses on SDG 3 'Good health and well-being' and SDG 5 'gender equality'.

Health emergencies are increasing in scale and complexity, reflecting the intersection of globalization, conflict and climate crisis. Concentrating on SDG 3 (good health and well-being), Member States noted with great concern that multiple and interconnected crises have significantly impacted global health outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic reversed nearly a decade of progress in life expectancy, exposed weaknesses in health systems, and disrupted essential services. Health emergencies are becoming more complex due to globalization, conflict, and climate change. Post-COVID-19, health disparities have worsened, with increases in obesity, malnutrition, mental health issues, gender-based violence, substance abuse, and homelessness, especially among vulnerable populations.

Particularly concerning to many Member States is the growing disparity in maternal and child health outcomes. While affluent sectors in some countries have seen improvements, marginalized communities face worsening rates of maternal mortality and pre-term births.

Countries noted that climate change is worsening health risks, while financial constraints limit healthcare funding. Small island developing States, for example, face rising sea levels and extreme weather that damage health infrastructure and drive outmigration, including of skilled workers. Proactive adaptation through investments in surveillance, early warning systems, and primary care is essential.

Several delegations reported on the devastating impact of conflicts on national healthcare systems, limiting access to services, and worsened food insecurity and health—especially for women and children. Displacement, human rights abuses, and medical staff shortages are widespread. Maternal and child mortality remain high due to lack of care, while children face missed immunizations and disrupted education.

Stagnation in universal health coverage, increasing health and gender inequalities and a rise in catastrophic health spending are observed across the world. Member States expressed concern that recent health emergencies have exposed the fragility of the current global architecture for health preparedness and response, including in the face of humanitarian crises and climate hazards.

The pandemic, conflict, and climate change have set back progress on SDG 5 (gender equality). Disruptions to reproductive health services have worsened maternal outcomes, while displacement and conflicts have been associated with increased gender-based violence. Limited resources are available due to growing humanitarian needs and debt crises which further reduce investment in women's rights. Renewed commitment to essential services and protections is crucial to advancing SDG 5.

While the Commission did not explicitly focus on SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), the importance of both Goals was reflected in the deliberations of Member States and invited experts as well as in the analysis of the theme contained in the reports of the Secretary-General. Multiple crises have tested the resilience of global partnerships and cooperation. Humanitarian emergencies and the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted aid flows from long-term development to immediate relief, while rising debt burdens have limited domestic resource mobilization. Member States also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated the need to strengthen global cooperation during health emergencies.

2. Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

Increasing access to health products and technologies

The Commission heard a thematic presentation from WHO on its 2025-2030 “Road map for access to safe, effective and quality-assured health products and technologies” and its contribution to the ICPD agenda and SDG 3, particularly to achieve universal health coverage (UHC). The WHO’s road map aims to accelerate access to health technologies through sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based solutions. It supports universal health coverage and improved health outcomes by strengthening systems, promoting collaboration, and using scientific research. Aligned with SDG 3, it addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: economically, by promoting affordable and efficient healthcare; socially, by reducing health inequities and prioritizing vulnerable populations; and environmentally, by integrating health into climate strategies and encouraging sustainable practices. Efforts to enhance UHC were reported by many delegations. For example, Mongolia and the Maldives noted the need to take advantage of effective sharing of technology and medical knowledge through online platforms and to develop telemedicine to expand affordable and accessible UHC also in remote areas. India reported on its focus on affordable healthcare by successfully reducing out-of-pocket expenditures. The importance of science and research was reflected in several statements, including in Japan’s that informed of the establishment of the Japan Institute for Health Security, that aims to strengthen national health crisis preparedness.

Strengthening health systems and expanding access to sexual and reproductive healthcare

National statements highlighted that progress toward SDG 3 is strongest where countries invest in resilient and inclusive health systems rooted in primary care and universal health coverage. Key actions include addressing health worker shortages, especially midwives, ensuring access to essential services, and improving care quality. The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2025/2) finds that a 25 per cent increase in midwife-led care every five years could prevent over 40 per cent of maternal deaths, avert 39 per cent of newborn deaths and 26 per cent of stillbirths. Countries such as Bangladesh and Zambia have seen major gains by investing in midwifery. Integrating sexual and reproductive health (SRH) into broader health strategies and ensuring service continuity through community outreach and digital tools are also driving measurable progress, even in crisis settings.

Using population data to understand demographic trends and inform policies

Timely, disaggregated population data enables evidence-based policies that respond to changing demographic realities. National statements showcase that investing in data systems, from censuses and CRVS to digital health and demographic projections, equips countries to address inequalities and to plan effectively across sectors. Population data helps align health, education, and labour policies with emerging needs, including in the context of ageing, migration, and climate change. Up-to-date demographic analysis strengthens policy coherence, supports monitoring and ensures that no one is left behind.

3. Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

Delegations shared examples of measures implemented at the national and regional levels to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. These measures involved well-coordinated actions in key areas and build on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

a. **Benin** is investing in human capital through major reforms in health, education, and gender equality. Key initiatives include universal health insurance, modernized healthcare, and community health agents for early disease prevention and treatment (SDG 3). The country's integrated public health efforts also address clean water, sanitation, waste management and housing (SDG 6). Nutrition and early childhood development are supported by expanded school meals and a national nutrition plan (SDG 2).

Gender equality is advanced through a 25 per cent quota for women in parliament, free education for girls, and the creation of the National Institute for Women (SDG 5). Women's economic empowerment is supported by microcredit programs (SDG 8).

Youth development is a national priority, with expanded access to quality education, active participation in the Vision 2060 strategy, and platforms like the Global Youth Dialogue to amplify young voices (SDG 4). Benin emphasizes global cooperation to achieve sustainable development for all (SDG 17).

b. **The European Union** reaffirms its commitment to ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3). Strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, including sexual and reproductive care, are central to its support for the ICPD Programme of Action. The EU calls for urgent action on the triple planetary crises, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution (SDG 13: Climate action, SDG 14: Life below water and SDG 15: Life on land), and stresses that fully implementing the ICPD agenda is key to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Gender equality remains a core priority, with a special focus on marginalized groups including women, youth, older persons, and people with disabilities (SDG 5 Gender equality).

c. **The delegation of Honduras** stated that despite global challenges like inequality, climate change, and multiple crises, the Government is advancing its New Social Contract centered on justice and dignity. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2022–2046) is currently being implemented, focusing on human rights and local contexts focusing on investing in health, education, care, and social protection as these investments are essential for inclusive and sustainable development. Key initiatives include: providing integrated services in health, early development, and nutrition (SDG 3: Good health and well-being); updating the Public Youth Policy through national consultations, focusing on mental health, sexuality education, violence prevention, and access to opportunities (SDG 4: Quality education); developing a National Care Policy to redistribute care responsibilities among the state, families, and communities (SDG 5: Gender equality) and advancing women's empowerment by providing agriculture and livestock programs (SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth).

4. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support the implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development in 2025

The Commission held a dedicated high-level panel discussion on how the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and on interlinkages with other United Nations forums. The first segment of the panel engaged officials from ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women, who underscored the importance of integrating the ICPD Programme of Action into national and global sustainable development strategies to achieve meaningful progress on health and well-being. They highlighted the need to align policies, financing and data systems and to address ECOSOC's priorities—such as displacement, digital health and financing gaps—through rights-based, inclusive and evidence-informed approaches. They also discussed approaches to strengthen interlinkages between the ICPD and Beijing platforms through integrated national action plans, enhanced data systems and greater coordination through multilateral forums.

The second segment featured officials from countries preparing voluntary national reviews for the 2025 HLPF, who discussed how implementation of the Programme of Action in their countries had contributed to progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The speakers highlighted the importance of inclusive policymaking, improvements in maternal health, expansion of education grants, community-led school renovations, data-driven planning, strengthening of data systems, expansion of sexual and reproductive healthcare services, advances in gender equality and women's empowerment, including efforts to address gender-based violence, coordination of national policies and multi-sectoral partnerships.

The Commission did not achieve consensus on a draft resolution on the special theme of the fifty-eighth session, “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”. The final draft², proposed by the Chair following more than two weeks of informal consultations, received strong support from the majority of delegations, highlighting the significance of the theme and Member States' continuing commitment to advancing the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During the negotiations, Member States agreed that health encompasses physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease. The final text proposed by the Chair discussed root causes like inequality, poverty, food insecurity and lack of access to education and healthcare. It highlighted the health impacts of crises and covered needs across the life course, from mothers and newborns to older persons. The text covered HIV/AIDS, communicable and non-communicable diseases, and the health needs of migrants and persons with disabilities. It noted the importance of strengthening healthcare systems, especially primary and community-based care, and of ensuring access to essential vaccines and medicines. It pointed as well to the importance of skilled health workers and to issues around healthcare financing and technology. While views differed on matters related to sexual and reproductive health, many delegations supported universal access to family planning services, education and STI/HIV prevention.

² [E/CN.9/2025/L.4](#)

Future sessions of the Commission on Population and Development

By integrating population dynamics into development planning and the monitoring of progress, the Commission on Population and Development continues to play a critical role in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through its annual sessions, the Commission promotes actions that respond to mandates provided by Member States in other fora, for example, the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit held in 2023, and the outcome documents of the Summit of the Future convened in 2024.

The Commission has repeatedly drawn attention to the importance of demographic trends as drivers of sustainable development, and this message has been reflected in the outcomes of other processes. The Declaration on Future Generations, emerging from the Summit of the Future, acknowledges the interlinkages between population issues and development across all regions and calls for strengthened cooperation among States in their response to demographic trends and realities, such as rapid population growth, declining birth rates and ageing populations.

The themes chosen for the Commission's 59th session in 2026, "Population, technology and research in the context of sustainable development" and for its 60th session in 2027, "Population, poverty eradication and sustainable development", offer an opportunity for Member States to engage with experts, exchange perspectives and deliberate on these important issues. These discussions are expected to build on the outcomes of the 2023 SDG Summit and the 2024 Summit of the Future, and will so contribute to the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF.

The following recommendations and key messages from the 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development can be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF:

a. Health is a human right and a centrepiece of sustainable development, recognized in various United Nations commitments, including in the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994 and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite earlier gains, progress on many health indicators has stalled in recent years. Achieving universal access to quality healthcare, including that related to sexual and reproductive health, is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

b. Health encompasses complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages requires a life course approach that addresses health needs in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

c. There are strong linkages between poverty and other social and economic determinants of health, and the deliberations recognized that ill health can both cause and result from poverty.

d. There is a need for increased political will to address financing for sustainable development to achieve gender equality.

e. Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health coverage is particularly crucial for achieving universal health coverage and the SDGs.

f. To improve health outcomes, it is important for Governments to build partnerships and collaborations with the private sector and internationally for financing for development and technology transfers, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.