



Talking Points for Mr. Juan Antonio A. Perez III,
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Chair of the Midterm Review of the
Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I had the honour to be elected Chair of the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development from 28-30 November. In this regard the member States entrusted me with the responsibility of summarizing the main outcomes and recommendations of the meeting, including its Chair's summary, as contained in document ESCAP/75/6.

I will not take time to go over organizational details; I would rather focus on two key findings and outcomes.

My first key finding is the continued relevance of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the policy actions and priority directions of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development for the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thanks to concerted efforts by countries and civil society organizations, the region has made great progress in addressing the linkages between population and development. Poverty has declined; access to sexual and reproductive health services has increased; people live longer and healthier lives than ever before.

However, much remains to be done.

My second key finding relates to the theme of this Commission, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Throughout the Meeting, participants noted large and often growing inequalities, which meant that many groups in society were at risk of being left behind. They called for a strong focus on identifying these groups and the barriers they face and finding ways to empower them. The barriers faced by young people were highlighted as a particular concern, along with a lack of data and means of monitoring regional progress on the priority actions and policy directions of the Ministerial Declaration.

Meeting participants noted that climate change is a major threat to the achievements in sustainable development. It affects population groups differently and needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The rising incidence of non-communicable diseases requires that we need to focus on new health threats. The growth in the number and share of older persons presents challenges and opportunities and there is urgent need in the region to develop policies and programmes to ensure a healthy, active and even productive ageing.

In particular, the Meeting made the following recommendations:

1. ESCAP and UNFPA, within their respective mandates, to continue to support Commission members and associate members in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of its reviews, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national and regional levels.

I understand that both, ESCAP and UNFPA are supporting member States in this regard, and I am very optimistic, that this support will continue in the foreseeable future. When addressing population and development concerns, both organizations complement each other well, and I call on you, the member States, to take advantage of the synergies both organizations have to offer.

2. ESCAP and UNFPA to further develop a regional monitoring framework to monitor the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as appropriate, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The framework should be submitted to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for its consideration by 2020.

I understand that ESCAP and UNFPA will take this process forward based on existing SDG indicators to avoid duplication and reduce burden on countries. They will also call on you, the member States, to contribute. Soon, ESCAP and UNFPA will ask for nominations from your country to participate in a meeting to develop this framework further. I ask you for your active engagement in this undertaking.

I would also like to inform you that the meeting report, including the Chair's summary as well as the regional overview and synthesis reports, were submitted as regional inputs to the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the Commission on Population and Development at its fifty-second session in New York this April. The high-level panel on the regional reviews, where I, with chairs from other regional review processes, presented the Asia-Pacific outcome document, was the highlight of the meeting in New York, informing the global review. The outcome Political Declaration of the Commission, marking the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action recognized that "the outcome documents of the regional review conferences [such as the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration] provide region-specific guidance on population and development for each region, that adopted the particular outcome documents".

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for making our review in November 2018 so successful. This review benefited from constructive engagement in the deliberations; the energy and expertise of civil society; and the excellent collaboration between ESCAP and UNFPA, who worked together seamlessly to join their respective strengths and mandates to deliver as one. Such meetings may serve as a model in other fields in showing how effective regional collaboration can support national action and global dialogue.

Finally, please allow me to thank you again for the trust bestowed upon me to serve as Chair of the Midterm Review and to submit its conclusion for your consideration here today.

Thank you.

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