

**Introduction of the Report on Methods of Work of the  
Commission on Population and Development**

Item 6 of the Agenda

By Hania Zlotnik  
Director, Population Division  
6 April 2005

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

## Multi-year work programme

Regarding its work programme, in 1995, the Commission recommended a multi-year work programme for the period 1996 to 1999, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (1995/55). In addition to setting the themes for each annual session of the Commission from 1996 to 1999, the Commission's first multi-year plan established that the Commission would consider the quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action in 1999.

Since 1995, the Commission has been selecting themes for future sessions at least two years in advance of each session, but a five-year programme of work has not been adopted again. Only in 2000 did the Commission select themes for three future sessions. The Commission may want to set a strict planning horizon for a multi-year work plan and endorse the periodic review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The adoption of a multi-year work programme and the selection of special themes has been guided by the need to review the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action in a structured and comprehensive manner over a given period. Since 1996, the themes selected have covered the major topics contained in the Programme of Action and, after 1999, in the key actions for its further implementation. Although there is generally a good correspondence between the themes selected and particular chapters of the Programme of Action, themes have often implied a clustering of topics treated in different chapters of the Programme of Action or the key actions. However, such clustering has been driven by the selection of a relevant and timely theme and not by the intent of focusing on the clusters per se. In this regard, the Commission has been giving priority to the consideration of key or emerging issues in the field of population and development rather than to the more mechanical coverage of all issues covered in the Programme of Action. The Commission may want to reconsider this practice and opt again for the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action through a multi-year work plan organized in terms of thematic clusters.

In 1995, the Commission requested that, in addition to the world population monitoring report focusing on the special theme, two other reports be presented under the item on follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development, namely, a report on programmes on the special theme and a report on the flow of financial resources assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action, both of which are prepared and introduced by the United Nations Population Fund. This practice allows the Commission to carry out in a single session the review of both the substantive and programmatic aspects of each special theme.

## Panel discussions and keynote speakers

Between 1998 and 2002, following a recommendation made by the Bureau at its intersessional meeting, the Commission heard panel discussions led by practitioners who presented in some depth the experience of their countries or regions in the implementation of the Programme of Action. It was found, however, that because of the length of the presentations, panel discussions did not lead to dialogue. For that reason, since 2003, panel discussions have been replaced by

keynote speakers. It has been found that single presentations by keynote speakers allow sufficient