

Opening remarks by Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division / DESA  
6 September 2022, 12 p.m., EDT

Good morning

In adopting the Programme of Action in Cairo in 1994, Governments recognized that education is a key element of sustainable development that influences individual well-being through its impact on social, economic and demographic processes. Lower levels of fertility and mortality, the empowerment of women and increases in worker productivity have all been assisted, if not driven, by expanded access to basic and higher levels of education.

The Cairo agreement calls for providing universal access to primary education and closing the gender gap in education at the primary and secondary levels. It requests Governments to expand policies and programmes to support youth and adult education and lifelong learning.

The Programme of Action also calls for providing formal and informal education about population and health issues, including sexual and reproductive health, to promote the well-being of adolescents.

In today's world, ensuring access to and facilitating the use of modern communication technologies is a vital means of addressing barriers to education, especially in developing countries. Last year in the UN General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, warned that without decisive action by the international community, the digital divide will become "the new face of inequality".

In short, this meeting could not be more timely.

Over the next two days, we will review the latest evidence and policy recommendations related to population, education and sustainable development. We will seek to identify concrete conclusions and concise recommendations for action that can inform the reports of the Secretary-General that I mentioned earlier.

I am confident that the meeting will be a success and that we will be able to identify concrete conclusions and concise recommendations for action that can inform the reports of the Secretary-General that I mentioned earlier.