

**COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH
E/CN.9/2012/4
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentleman,

It is my pleasure to introduce the report of the Secretary-General entitled Adolescents and youth (E/CN.9/2012/4). This report describes levels and trends in the size of the adolescent and youth population, their marriage patterns, their experience in regard to childbearing and the use of contraception, and their health status. It also touches on the role of international migration as a strategy for young people to access education and employment opportunities. The report provides a set of concrete policy recommendations that allow young people to transition safely from childhood to adulthood and to participate fully in all spheres of society.

In December 2010, the General Assembly noted that, while progress had been made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, considerable gaps still existed in its implementation. Meeting the needs and aspirations of adolescents and youth will be essential in narrowing these gaps.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ages at which the periods of adolescence and youth begin and end are not clearly defined.

Adolescence is usually considered to begin with puberty and tends to last two to four years. Reproductive maturation, one of the key markers of this transition, often starts around the age of 12 or 13 for girls and around the age of 13 or 14 for boys. Taking into account that the legal age of majority is 18 in many countries, the adolescent population is sometimes referred to as those aged 12 to 17.

Similarly, the period of youth is delineated in various ways. For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth. The use of 15, rather than 18, as the lower bound is motivated by practical, rather than substantive, considerations: most demographic data is available by five-year age groups.

To capture both adolescence and youth, the report of the Secretary-General generally targets the age group 12 to 24. However, slightly different age groups have also been used in the report when dictated by data limitations.

Globally, the population of adolescents and youth is at an all time high. Currently, our world counts an estimated 1.6 billion young people, including 721 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 and 850 million youth aged 18 to 24. Over the next 30 years, the global number of young people is projected to remain relatively stable.

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adolescent birth rate, it is also reporting the smallest gain in reducing adolescent pregnancies since 1990.

One crucial way to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies is by protecting and promoting the rights of adolescents to reproductive health education, information and care, including family planning.

Recent surveys conducted in developing countries indicate that among currently married women aged 15 to 19, 56 per cent wish to have a child or are intentionally pregnant, 20

They may also move independently in order to find employment, to improve their education or to acquire skills.

The report indicates the benefits of migration may go well beyond those of the individual migrant. Countries of origin may benefit from the training and skills that young people have acquired abroad by maintaining links while they are abroad and by facilitating their reintegration into the labour market upon return.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action can only be implemented if we address the multiple and varied needs of adolescents and youth with respect to their education, health, and well-being in a comprehensive way.

Thank you.