Forty-Eighth Session of the Commission on Population and Development

<u>Item 4</u>

General debate on national experience in population matters: realizing the future we want: integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda

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Madame Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The IUSSP is the international association of population scientists, with members hailing from 130 countries. We have long worked with the United Nations on issues related to population phenomena, often with the financial support of the UNFPA. Over the past year, one of our working groups has focused its attention on the Data Revolution – the topic of my remarks today.

We have three recommendations in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

First, all SDG indicators should be provided with measures of their accuracy. It is essential that attention be paid to uncertainty in estimates, and that we recognize that, when dealing with relatively rare events (like maternal mortality) or with small populations (the principle   of "leave no one behind"), it may at times be impossible to obtain sufficiently accurate estimates for monitoring change.

Second, the monitoring and measurement of indicators should not become an end in themselves. These data must be used to intervene to improve the lives and livelihoods of the

most vulnerable. We recommend that the strong emphasis placed on data for SDG indicators allow place for collecting other equally important information, including the causal determinants of those indicators.

In this, population size, growth and age distribution are of central importance, and population censuses remain the gold standard for obtaining data on those variables. Population data are critical for the measurement of many SDG indicators. Per capita income, for instance, has population size in its denominator. If those indicators are to be accurate, then the underlying population estimates too must be accurate. Population projections are needed if indicators are to be produced annually. For the intervals between censuses, that means having detailed information on the components of population change, including internal and international migrations. Finally, the evolving age structure of populations underlies the demographic dividend and population aging – issues of enormous importance to both low and high-income countries across the world.

Third, the effort required for capacity-building in national statistical systems in poorer countries must not be underestimated. We recommend that more attention be placed on ensuring that these institutions have enough resources, including well-trained staff, to meet the challenges of the Data Revolution. Funding for demographic training and research has not kept pace with demand for information – demands that will rapidly grow in upcoming years. With a premium on the use of evidence to monitor progress and guide policy comes a premium on investment in data collection, processing, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination skills.

There is an urgent need to reinvest in the training of demographers and to integrate the core components of demography into the training curriculums of statisticians. We urge the Commission to consider these training needs, and to request that adequate funding be channeled towards them.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.