

I. Introduction

1. The Commission on Population and Development, at its fifty-third session, decided to include an agenda item on the future role and organization of the Commission in the provisional agenda for its fifty-fourth session. This agenda item was added for three main reasons.

- First, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/305, it would allow the Commission to assess the continued need for annual negotiated outcomes and to ensure that, when it produces such outcomes, they are effective and action-oriented and result in increased levels of cooperation (paragraph 30).
- Second, it would permit the Commission to evaluate its response to ECOSOC resolution 2016/25, which requests the Commission to, inter alia, maintain the technical quality of the Commission (paragraph 5), to afford the opportunity for NGOs to actively participate in the work of the Commission (paragraph 9), and to adequately reflect (paragraph 14).
- Third, it would encourage the Commission to reflect on the challenges it has been facing in recent years in reaching consensus on a resolution on the special theme of the Commission and to explore how this situation could be avoided in the future.

2. To inform the reflection on this item, the Secretariat prepared a background note under the auspices of the Bureau of the fifty-third session.¹ In the note, Member States were invited to respond in writing to the following three questions:

- a) Given that the Commission is the only intergovernmental forum focused on the implementation of the Programme of Action in

implementation of the Programme of Action and the achievement of the population-related SDGs.

19. Many countries highlighted the importance of the availability of reliable, high-quality, disaggregated data in assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action, enabling Member States to identify areas lacking

25. While recognizing the added value of expert panels, a few Member States stressed that panelists should be

C. Methods of adoption of draft proposals

51. Without exception, Member States favoured continuing the tradition of adopting the resolutions and decisions of the Commission by consensus. As a last resort, however, some countries felt that in certain situations it may be necessary and appropriate to explore the possibility of voting if consensus could not be reached, either on specific paragraphs or on an entire proposal. Although the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the ECOSOC allow for voting on a draft proposal that is before the Commission upon the request of a member, and despite the fact that some other bodies had resorted to voting on their main outcomes, many respondents noted that the value of the resolutions and the future role would be diminished if its resolutions were to be adopted through a vote.

52. Member States indicated that the Commission could consider various strategies that would allow decision-making on draft proposals as a whole by consensus. Member States, including members and non-members of the Commission, could make statements in connection with action on a draft proposal, either before or after, expressing reservations on, or disassociating from, selected paragraphs of a resolution adopted by consensus. This would help to ensure that the outcome reflected the position and priorities of most delegations, while allowing delegations to express their concerns on specific issues, while still joining the consensus on the text as a whole. Also, a member of the Commission could request a vote on one or more selected paragraphs without requesting a vote on the resolution as a whole.

53. It was pointed out that the goal of reaching consensus should not be understood as a on issues of key concern to many Member States.

54. Few Member States favoured an outcome of the deliberations on the special theme. Nevertheless, some could usefully capture the diversity of opinions expressed during the annual session in case a consensus outcome could not be achieved.

55. Referring to the significance of the work of the Commission, most Member States affirmed their preference for continuing the current practice of negotiating a resolution on the special theme each year. A few Member States proposed to adopt a resolution on the special theme every other year in order to allow more time to gather evidence, to exchange views, and to reach consensus. However, some respondents cautioned that by negotiating a resolution every other year Member States would have fewer opportunities to hold substantive and evidence-based discussions and to reach compromise and that, consequently, the

sovereignty paragraph in the resolution and contended that the regional reviews of the Programme of Action only applied to the regions in which they had been held.

57. Other Member States

The Population Division and UNFPA could:

- Prepare a comparative analysis of the Programme of Action and relevant Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Organize technical events in the margins of the HLPF, showcasing the findings of the annual session;
- Hold informal technical briefings or expert dialogues on the special theme for Member States and NGOs ahead of the annual session;
- Systematically involve other United Nations entities and NGOs with relevant expertise in technical prep44.02 592.66865