



URUGUAY

Statement of

Dr. Luis Almagro, Minister of Foreign
Affairs

Follow-Up to the Programme of Action of
the International Conference on Population
and Development
(Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly)

*New York, September 22, 2014
(Please check against delivery)*

Mr President,

Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the Cairo Programme of Action, which established forward-looking goals in 1994. In this regard, we have worked to eliminate the inequality gaps in the promotion and protection of human rights, with special emphasis on vulnerable populations and those whose human rights have been violated.

Uruguay is deeply committed to the reduction of poverty and the elimination of extreme poverty; to achieving greater economic and social equity and generating the greatest possible inclusion and cohesion, with emphasis on the Citizen Security and Coexistence strategy presented by President Mujica.

Poverty has been reduced by two-thirds. Since 2004, the poverty rate fell from 39.9% to 12.4%, and extreme poverty fell from 4.7% to 0.5%. To reverse this situation of social inequality, the National Social Emergency and Citizen Income Plan was established, targeted at the population in extreme poverty, at ensuring school attendance, and at health checks. With the Equity Plan, universal access to social services and income was promoted, restructuring the system of social protection.

Infant mortality has been reduced from 12.2 to 8.6 per 1,000 live births in the past three years. To achieve this, health coverage was reinforced in priority population segments, such as children and adolescents, and pregnant women. The Uruguay Grows with You Program implemented by the government, which is producing excellent results, is an example of this.

Comment [p1]: figure is given as percentage but this is incorrect

The comprehensiveness of sexual and reproductive health services, ranging from voluntary abortion to assisted fertilization, from universal quality contraception to comprehensive education in sexual and reproductive health, has enabled Uruguay to meet the fifth Millennium Development Goal (MDG), on the reduction of maternal mortality.

With the adoption of the Equal Marriage Law and Civil Partner Law, cohabitation and marriage between people of the same sex, regardless of their identity, sexual orientation or preference, was legalized.

Furthermore, Uruguay has advanced in the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and in promotion of ethnic and racial equality through laws and programs aimed at a more inclusive society.

Uruguay continues to drive gender equality and empowerment of women, promoting gender mainstreaming across the board in all state policies.

With the new Migration Law and its regulations, policies that facilitate the return of Uruguayans living abroad were implemented. Days ago, Law 19,254 was enacted to facilitate the permanent residence in Uruguay of family members of Uruguayans of foreign origin and of nationals of States Parties and Associates of

MERCOSUR.

In order to deepen our commitment to international instruments, I should mention the First Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, where a historic agreement was adopted in October 2013, known as the Montevideo Consensus, which goes beyond the Cairo Agreement, recognizing sexual rights, respect for sexual orientation and gender identity, comprehensive sex education, the importance of sexual and reproductive health services, and all the issues associated with the life and health of men, women and LGBTI's. Of particular importance is inclusion in the health system of women undergoing unwanted pregnancies, even where this is illegal, since it is the duty of States to provide full support to reduce maternal mortality, services in a framework of equality and protection and the full protection of human rights for all without discrimination.

Uruguay also chaired the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development, adopting by consensus a resolution reaffirming the principles of the Cairo Programme of Action. The resolution includes a new commitment to continue placing reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health of women and girls at the centre of population and development policies.

Our country's presidency of both the Montevideo Consensus and the Commission on Population and Development place Uruguay in a privileged place to advance the definition of the Post-2015 Agenda and the strengthening of public policies viewed from the perspective of human rights where the population and their rights are the central focus of the sustainable development of our peoples.

In this regard, we support the Report of the Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals, and the objectives and goals set out in it, which despite the challenge they represent for everyone, motivate us to continue working on deepening our achievements and our constant struggle for equality and respect for human rights by means of the implementation of cross-cutting programs and national policies with equality.

In all of this you may continue to rely on our support.

Thank you very much.