

Republic of India

Positions for Commission on Population and Development

I. Addressing the Challenges and Needs within Declining Populations

The Republic of India is committed to tackling global challenges associated with declining populations as evidenced by the themes expressed in E/CN.9/2022/L.6, a resolution in which all forty-seven member-states reached a solution. Although the Republic of India, the most populous member-state in the world, does not suffer from a declining population to the extent of other member-states, the UN projects that it is one of many countries that will face declines in population rates and even slight depopulation by the late twenty-first century. Furthermore, many of the challenges facing declining populations mirror India's own and make India's participation in finding solutions imperative. For instance, various developed countries suffer from declining fertility rates that place an economic strain on aging populations. India has one of the highest populations of young people in the world, but the UNFPA predicts that the elderly population, that is those individuals over the age of sixty, will go from around ten percent in 2021 to over twenty percent in 2050. While not a current issue, this will place a strain on India's labor market as eligible workers decline. Also, one of India's most significant challenges is the brain drain phenomenon, an issue that prevents many developing countries from maintaining the brightest, most educated minds that lead to economically vibrant innovations. This is especially prominent in higher education, as a 2021 report noted that over 700 thousand Indian college students went overseas for better opportunities. Part of this is likely due to the fact that India devotes less than one percent of their gross domestic product on research, a full percentage point lower than the global average. India has introduced a multitude of fellowships to combat this such as the Ramanujan Fellowship, the Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship, and the Early Career Fellowship in Basic Biomedical Research, all of which encourage skilled Indian workers to stay within the country and bolster their economies. Similar initiatives can be implemented worldwide through various UN committees, international organizations, and NGOs to propel developing countries economically and give their populations the ability to compete on a global stage.

Declining populations lead to less laborers, a truth that leads to lower tax revenue. The Republic of India **understands** that such an effect accompanies a lower quality of public programs such as education, social security, transportation, infrastructure, and medical services, all of which are integral to a society's foundation. With this in mind, the Republic of India **reemphasizes** the sentiments echoed in the World Population Plan of Action that encourage each member state to develop sovereign policies that reduce mortality by eradicating parasitic diseases and malnutrition, introduce further social welfare programs that improve education and integrate diverse populations into the workforce, and encourage immigration as a means to increase declining populations. Furthermore, India **recognizes** that sustaining a shrewd, innovative workforce is essential to the economic growth of developing countries. India has introduced a multitude of fellowships to incentivize Indian citizens to stay or return to the country, and the Republic of India aims to further these initiatives by encouraging the allocation of budgetary funds towards research and higher education. To this end, the Republic of India **introduces** the BrainGain Initiative (BGI), a collaborative measure between the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the aim of reducing the brain drain phenomenon. This will be funded primarily through the ECOSOC and the UNITAR budgets which are mainly funded through the four permanent Security Council member states as well as willing and able member states. This program will have long-term ambitions, with the objective of reducing brain drain and keeping skilled workers in developing countries by gathering experts and researchers that work to develop national and regional policies that work for specific areas and identify the nuanced push-pull factors of brain drain, providing sponsorships and loans to qualified migrants to incentivize them to return their home state, and implement flexible ideas that combat the brain drain phenomenon and aid in the social, cultural, and economic evolution of developing countries. The Republic of India **acknowledges** the multifaceted issues that compliment declining populations, but India asserts that these problems are solvable with the right degree of compassion and cooperation from willing and able member states.

II. Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Response to Rapid Population Growth

The Republic of India **acknowledges** the serious challenges caused by rapid urban population growth and as the current most populous country in the world with a population of 1.417 billion people, our cities are grappling with population related challenges as urbanization accelerates. Urban centers such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore are growing at an unmatched pace, causing a high strain on transportation, housing, infrastructure and resources, resulting in cramped living conditions. This is as a result of the rapid influx of people from rural areas seeking better economic opportunities and has ended up straining space and infrastructure. Annually, according to the World Health Organization, 13 million children are stillborn and add up to the population in India causing a more drastic population rate. This means that every year, India is gaining a number of people roughly equal to the entire population of some countries, like Greece or Sweden. As a result, cities become more crowded, and the demand for resources grows faster than the supply, creating challenges in managing urban living conditions.

The Republic of India recognizes the state of our populous cities since 2015, which resulted in the government taking a significant step to promote sustainable urban development by increasing urban development expenditure eight-fold between 2015 and 2021 totaling RS. 11.83 LAKH CRORE. However, while urban development can improve the quality of life and manage strain on resources, it does not directly reduce population growth. The initiative may have helped improve the living conditions in the cities, but to control overall population growth, more targeted efforts are needed to achieve this goal. Although these initiatives are equally pivotal and do not reduce the population growth, we believe that effective population control requires more strategic measures on family planning initiatives, expansion and enhancing public transport, and focusing highly on climate change. India **realizes** the essence of a moderate population, therefore the government has not been dormant about it, rather implemented initiatives that aim to reduce the high population growth yearly. The government of India on 26th September 2016 inaugurated a program, Mission Parivar Vikas, meant to increase the access to family planning services and contraceptives. The goal of this program is to reduce total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.1 by 2025. It focused on seven states with high fertility rate, the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, and Assam. Notably, when that have successfully managed their population growth have often seen significant improvements in women's empowerment and economic development. For instance, when women in rural areas have greater access to family planning services and education, they can make very informed choices about childbearing, which will result to healthier families and communities.

Overall, the current aim of India is to expand and enhance public transport in both urban and rural areas to decrease urban migration while promoting development and sustainability in rural areas. Knowing that transportation is a pivotal part of our everyday lives, it does not only help in the movement of individuals from one destination to the other, it equally helps in the movement of goods, connecting cities and towns making it possible to trade, share resources, and access essential services like healthcare and education. Economies like China, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom amongst others with good transportation systems have improved their economies, reduced travel time, and made life more convenient. Good transportation system helps reduce traffic and pollution. The 11th Sustainable Development Goal amongst the 17 goals by the United Nation's focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030, whereas the 13th Goal emphasizes protecting the planet. India finds the invention of innovative transportation key and crucial in addressing urban population growth in our country. As our cities expand, the demand for sustainable transport becomes paramount and needs must be met. According to the World Resources Institute, transitioning to electric and low-emission public transport could reduce urban transport emissions to 60% by 2050, this innovation will not only reduce emission, rather movement will be made easier. Therefore, India **proposes** there should be an adoption of electric buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation starting with the major cities and expansion to the rural areas. Also, provisions of incentives for cities to replace fuel-based vehicles or hybrid alternatives is very essential to this development. This aligns with United Nations habitat's emphasis on sustainable urban mobility solutions to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well. Ideally India **suggests** that to promote sustainable urban development, there is a need not only to implement this policy in the major urban areas but subsequently expand the rural areas with good transportation and resources diversification to continuously promote sustainability and reduce pressure on urban centers. Regardless of the many efforts that will be implemented in the urban areas if the same is not present in rural areas, migration will be at the surge and sustainability will be a challenging goal to achieve.