

DRAFT

**ADDRESS TO THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
by**

H.E. Ambassador Abulkalam Abdul Momen

Delivered on behalf of

H.E. Lazarus Kapambwe

President

Economic and Social Council

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10:00 – 13:00

Conference Room 1 (NLB)

Agenda Item 6

***General debate on the contribution of population and development issues
to the theme of the annual ministerial review in 2011***

Mister Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address the 44th session of the Commission on Population and Development on behalf of H. E. Lazarus Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council. I would like to assure you of the full support of ECOSOC for the efforts of the Commission to advance the global agenda on population and development, particularly as they relate to this year's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). As you know, the AMR will focus this year on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education."

Improving educational attainment, especially among girls, is one of the major recommendations made by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. In fact, this Commission devoted its thirty-sixth session in 2003 to the consideration of the interrelations between population, education and development. The reports presented to the Commission that year noted that education is strongly related to a broad range of demographic behaviours and that differences between countries in levels of fertility and mortality could be traced to differences in educational attainment. One of the major conclusions of the reports presented was that education both influences and, over time, is influenced by demographic factors. I expect that the general debate we will hold today on the interrelations between population, education and development will further shed light on how efforts to improve the coverage and quality of education in different countries have affected and are in turn affected by demographic behaviour.

It would be useful to discuss, in particular, how population dynamics and, especially the changes that you have been discussing here during the past three days, can facilitate the attainment of universal primary education. As we know, reductions in fertility result eventually in fewer children both at the national level and in families and thus make it less costly to educate all of them or to spend more in the education of each child.

Furthermore, in all societies, more education translates into better health outcomes. Education empowers women and makes them better prepared to adopt healthy behaviours and to seek healthcare for themselves and their families. Child marriage, child mortality and maternal mortality drastically reduce with female education. Educated women are better able to plan their families and are more aware of the opportunities that having fewer children open for themselves and their families. Educated parents value education and are more likely to ensure that their children profit from schooling. As many have noted before me, education is key not only for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 but, perhaps more importantly, for maintaining that achievement in the future.

Since their successful launch in 2007, the Annual Ministerial Reviews that the Council has conducted have been instrumental in galvanizing efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger; foster sustainable development; improve global public health, and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year, by focusing on education, we expect to add new impetus to all the programmes aiming at the attainment of universal education. We are particularly interested in scaling-up successful interventions and in sharing lessons learnt and successful approaches that can contribute to ensure that all children, but particularly those of low-income families, attend to school, stay in school and learn.

Since a critical function of ECOSOC is to promote system-wide coherence, it is appropriate for the Commission to make us part of its deliberations. It is also useful for me to share with you information about the series of preparatory activities that are being undertaken in the lead-up to the AMR in July. Two preparatory regional meetings at the ministerial level have been held: one in Doha, Qatar, for the Arab region, and one in Jomtien, Thailand, for the Asia-Pacific region. A similar meeting is being held in Africa in April and another in Latin America and the Caribbean in May. We have also held an event to mobilize philanthropic institutions. Entitled “partnering with the philanthropic community to promote education for all”, it was held in New York on 28 February.

We have moderated two Internet-based e-discussion forums during February and March. They were organized in collaboration with the UN Development Group MDG-Net, the Department of Public Information and partners in UNICEF and UNESCO.

Along with these activities, eleven member States have been busy in preparing their national voluntary presentations. This year Bangladesh, Belarus, Germany, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Turkey and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have volunteered to make presentations, their large number indicating the high priority that countries give to this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

While the activities that I have enumerated are crucial to the success of the AMR, they can only generate some of the ideas and recommendations that need to be considered and pursued. The functional commissions are an important source of input to assess progress, identify obstacles and devise effective strategies to achieve these goals, especially when those strategies involve other areas of action that are not directly related to education. I commend the Commission for the inclusion of today's item in its agenda i.e. education and for engaging the member States that will make National Voluntary Presentations (NVP) at the 2011 AMR. Such exchanges are very useful in leveraging the synergies between our works.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since this year's AMR will discuss Education, let me inform you that Education still remains a distant promise. Still our 25 million primary school-aged children are out of school in LDCs, existing systems are plagued by low completion rates, poor school facilities, low quality instruction, high teacher-pupil ratios, low infrastructures and lack of qualified teachers and more importantly girls are disproportionately effected by these trends.

Although we know that evidence suggest each additional year of school raise average gross domestic product growth by 0.3% and one extra year of schooling increases an individual's earning by up to 10%, unfortunately resource dedicated to education is still very low. UNESCO reports that education for all goal in poor countries will require aid of \$16 billion dollar per year. In 2008 it received \$2 billion dollars only.

As per US National Priority Project, out of \$2,628 billion revenue received for taxes in 2007, \$1.11 trillion or 42% spent for military while only \$115 billion or 4% was spent for education, training, social service, elementary, secondary and higher education in USA in 2007. The scenario in developing countries and LDCs is much worse. As per day before yesterday's SIPRI report, global community spent \$1.5 trillion for defence in 2009 alone.

One thing is perfectly clear, continued progress in education depends on recipient and donor governments alike placing education at the heart of their agenda. ECOSOC itself will continue to prioritize education in comings years, will work on cross-cuttings issues like employment, poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, technology transfer, social inclusion and sustainable development.

I am confident that the Commission will continue to provide intergovernmental leadership in relation to population and its interrelations with various aspects of development.

To conclude, let me thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for your commitment to maintaining and strengthening the linkages between the work of the Commission and that of the Council.

Thank you.