



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

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Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Delegates

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development has led to a paradigm shift in the understanding and implementation of population and development policies and programs. It has provided a comprehensive framework on population and development in the context of achieving sustainable and inclusive development, and promoting dignity and equal opportunities for all people, especially youth and adolescents. The Programme of Action recognizes human rights of adolescents and youth, their rights to development, to education, to health, including sexual and reproductive health.

General Assembly resolution 65/234 (April 2011) noted the validity of the Programme of Action and the existence of considerable gaps in its implementation since 1994. Emphasizing the need for “governments to recommit themselves at the highest political level to achieving the goals and objectives” this resolution called for an operational review for full implementation of the Program of Action.

Mr. Chairman

In order to fully implement the program of action in Africa we must engage adolescents and youth at all levels. Full implementation also requires consideration of the issues and concerns of adolescents and youth, particularly their reproductive health and education, their needs for jobs and employment opportunities, and their migrations within the continent and abroad

The regional reviews carried out at 5, 10 and 15 show that ECA Member States are committed to the implementation of the Program of Action, and to undertaking the necessary measures for integrating population and development issues, including gender inequality, sexual reproductive health and rights, and HIV/AIDS in their national development plans and strategies. However, commitment and political will can hardly be generalized to all the countries, and they are rarely underpinned by actions and adequate allocation of financial and human resources to population activities and programmes, particularly programs related to youth and adolescents..

Moreover, the regional reviews indicate that implementation of the Programme of Action in Africa is fragmentary. Countries with sound population and development policies are yet to develop programmes and action plans for their implementation. Most countries face the challenge of harmonization of population policies with sectoral polices in areas such as health, education, economic development, and social protection. There is also lack of coordination and cooperation between sector ministries. Added to this is the inadequate cooperation with and among development partners.

Among the problems to be addressed to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD PoA in Africa are the institutional and technical constraints that most of the countries face. Many population units within ministries, universities and other institutions lack adequate human and financial resources. Shortage of skills in population and development and high staff turnover impede the ability of

governments to undertake policy research and to integrate population issues and concerns in development plans and strategies.

Besides paucity of data and shortage of policy research, the implementation of the Programme of Action in Africa is derailed by cultural and behavioral factors, and by the lack of certain laws and policies such as minimum age at marriage and retirement age. There is also low coverage of the registration of vital events such as births, deaths and migration. Given the existence of these gaps, there is need for intensive advocacy and awareness activities to formulate and review laws and policies, and to provide an enabling environment for accelerating the implementation of the PoA in Africa.

Mr. Chairman

While efforts have been made since 1994 by Member States, a lot needs to be done to fully implement the ICPD agenda beyond 2014 in Africa. Preparations for this critical stage are already underway in Africa. Spearheaded by ECA, UNFPA and the AUC, the ICPD Beyond 2014 activities will be intensified to undertake an **operational review** of the implementation of the Programme of Action on the basis of the highest-quality data and analysis of the state of population and development in Africa. ECA will ensure that youth and adolescents will engage in the operational review at national and regional levels in order to fully implement the Programme of Action in all ECA Member States.

Thank You