

STATEMENT

By

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Mr President

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish first of all to convey the apologies of my Minister for not being able to participate in this very important and timely meeting owing to last minute commitments. Nonetheless, my Minister wishes to reassure this Meeting that Mauritius is fully committed to the endeavours being envisaged and measures being undertaken at this juncture in a bid to ensure that the population and development portfolio becomes indivisible to the wider global integration agenda.

Mr President

On behalf of the Government of Mauritius, we wish to thank UNFPA which has worked closely with Member States through the global survey design process and the regional reviews to produce the report entitled "Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014".

Mauritius supports this reviewed document which is before this Commission for interactive discussions on the assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action. This forum provides Africa an opportunity to play an active role in setting the global agenda on population and development that takes into account Africa's perspective and development priorities. We believe that the actions identified in the report are crucial for the further implementation of the ICPD agenda and for achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its linkages with the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

As highlighted in the report, Mauritius shares the conclusion that investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across the multiple sectors of the ICPD and throughout the life-course is the foundation of sustainable development.

We are pleased to see that human rights and equality define the analytical approach to the report. The focus on the increasing wealth and income inequalities; unfulfilled gender equality and empowerment of women; the need for lifelong learning and building human capabilities especially for young people; addressing the inequalities in universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including through strengthening health systems both in rural and urban areas, have significant implications for development policy.

We agree that the development challenges we face nowadays require systematic participation of all stakeholders in crafting responses to these challenges which require global partnership and the UN leadership.

Mr President

Allow me to say a few words about my country. Mauritius experienced a demographic crisis in the early 60's. Nonetheless, stringent and swift measures such as malaria eradication and control of infectious diseases within a relatively short period resulted in a sharp decrease in general mortality and in particular in maternal and infant mortality. This decline in death rate combined with an increase in birth rate resulted to an increase in population growth from less than a per cent per annum during the 1940/50 decade to about 3.1 per cent per annum between 1952 and 1962. If that rate were maintained, the population of Mauritius would have increased from about 700,000 in the 60s to nearly 3.5 million presently.

Alarmed by the sudden increase in population growth rates and the repercussions these could have on the economy – the government of Mauritius adopted a series of policy measures to bring about a healthier balance between human resources and its environment. Conscious of the fact that the inter relationships between people,

resources, environment and development are complex issues which need careful planning and management, Mauritius succeeded in managing the population growth and in maintaining sustained economic development. In fact, through a coherent, well adapted and sustainable Family Planning Programme, coupled with access to free education and employment opportunities to women, the population growth rate has been brought down to only one percent annually and the population size stands around 1.3 million. We have thus been able to reduce the average number of children per couple from 6 in 1962 to 2 at present, thereby ensuring a sustainable and manageable population for the country.

Mauritius is now experiencing an ageing population whereby the population 60 years and over will increase from 13% at present to 30% in 2050 whereas the proportion of young age population aged 0-14 years will decrease from 20% at present to 13 % in 2050.

Mr President

Allow me to state a few achievements observed in the last five decades:

- The total fertility rate decreased from 5.86 in 1962 to 1.41 in 2012
- Adolescent fertility rate decreased from 107.3 in 1962 to 28.2 in 2012
- Infant mortality rate decreased from 60.1 in 1962 to 13.4 in 2012
- Maternal mortality rate has decreased from 1.8 (per one thousand live births) in 1962 to 0.65 in 2012
- Life expectancy has increased from 62 in 1962 to 77 in 2012 for women and from 58 years to 70 years for men during the same period

The policy of the Government is now oriented towards a paradigm shift from reaching demographic targets to a long term vision for the sustainable development of the country. In this context, the Maurice Ile Durable (MID) project is being implemented to make Mauritius a world model of sustainable development, particularly in the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Thank you