



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

**NATIONAL STATEMENT TO THE 51ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
“SUSTAINABLE CITIES, HUMAN MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION”
09-13 APRIL 2018**

Chairperson

On behalf of the South African Delegation, I wish to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election, and to thank you as well as the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for and organisation of the current Session. We also wish to thank the Secretary General for the very informative reports that have been prepared to inform our discussions this week, including the report titled *Flow of Financial Resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*, which we find methodologically innovative and highly informative, as an important part of the mechanisms with which to monitor the implementation of the ICPD PoA. My Delegation wishes to express its full support to you and the Bureau during the Session.

Chairperson

In the centenary year of our late former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, we are reminded of his words that:

“This must be a world of democracy and respect for human rights, a world freed from the horrors of poverty, hunger, deprivation and ignorance, relieved of the threat and the scourge of civil wars and external aggression and unburdened of the great tragedy of millions forced to become refugees.”

In 2018 South Africa also celebrates 20 years since the adoption of our *Population Policy* by our National Assembly. We wish to re-affirm our Country’s commitment to the work of the Commission in support of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994, and its Key Actions (1999), which our country continues to fully support, because they have the potential to contribute to the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of women.

We are pleased that sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration - the theme of the current Session - has been placed on the global policy agenda for economic and social development. International economic inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, the absence of peace and security, as well as human rights

violations are some of the factors affecting the international and national movement of people, including rapid urbanisation, particularly in developing countries.

Chairperson

South Africa's *National Development Plan (NDP)* acknowledges that approximately 60 percent of South Africans live in urban areas. In line with global trends, the movement of people from rural areas to cities is expected to continue, and by the year 2030, it is anticipated that about 70 percent of South Africa's population will live in urban areas. The Country's major cities have been experiencing rapid population growth, as they are perceived to have a healthy job market. Between 2001 and 2011, the population in major cities in South Africa grew by more than 25 percent compared to 10 percent in the rest of the country. A sizable proportion of that growth can be attributed to the increased mobility of our people due to the massive social developmental investments that our government has made over the past 24 years, and because of the abolition of the restrictions on people's mobility that was a basic foundation of apartheid.

To this end, interventions to ensure environmental sustainability, new spatial norms and standards, improving transport, locating jobs where people live, upgrading informal settlements and fixing housing market gaps, remain high on the agenda of the South African Government. For example, the implementation of development policies such as the *Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 2013 (SPLUMA)*, the *National Framework on Sustainable Development (NFSD)*, as well as the *Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) 2016-2019*, all aim to improve access and inclusion of marginalised people in urban areas, to make South Africa's cities safe and inhabitable, and improve the productive capacity in cities as well as addressing income poverty.

It is also imperative that families, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, among others, are not neglected in the creation of sustainable cities and to ensure that no one is left behind.

In relation to international migration, South Africa is one of the major destination countries in southern Africa. Our country's demographic patterns have become progressively complex and diverse, and amongst others consists of high levels of international and regional circular migration, as well as internal movements.

The national Census in 2011 and the 2016 Community Survey reported that more than 75% of international migrants living in South Africa came from the African continent. Our *NDP* recognises that in order for migration to contribute positively to development in South Africa, the country needs to manage it cautiously. The *NDP* further signals that if migration is poorly managed, the skills and potential of migrants could be neglected to the detriment of the Country.

Chairperson

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges “*the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development*”, in countries of origin, transit and destination, and calls on countries to ensure the safety of migrants, respect the human rights of migrants (including refugees) and to promote continental and regional norms and standards. In line with Target 10.7 of the SDGs, South Africa is a proponent of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. With this in mind, South Africa supports a negotiated outcome on migration in the form of the *Global Compact on Migration*.

Chairperson

Data suggests that African migrants are younger compared to the rest of the world. When young people migrate, it is often in anticipation of a better life for themselves and to provide remittances to their families. This can present opportunities for countries in terms of innovation and economic growth, if the demographic dividend is harnessed through appropriate planning, policies and services for young people.

While international migration may present a number of positive aspects, it unfortunately also has a dark underbelly. A number of international migrants remain vulnerable, particularly migrant families in their various forms as well as women and children who can be exploited economically, as well as physically and emotionally. Migrant women are often restricted to unstable jobs, marked by low wages, the absence of social services, insufficient legal protection, and poor working conditions. Older persons and migrants with disabilities are also often neglected in migration planning and policies.

Chairperson

South Africa strongly deplores the human trafficking and modern-day slave trading of vulnerable migrants and urges Member States to work effortlessly to prevent such inhumane practices.

International migrants, particularly adolescent migrants, are particularly vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Sexually Transmitted Infections, unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, and an unmet need for contraceptives. This is usually the consequence of the disruptive effect that restrictive migration policies have on migrant families. It is also the result of poor sexual and reproductive health services to migrant communities. Often Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer migrants are denied the sexual and reproductive health and rights and other health-related services that many people otherwise take for granted. Sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including the right to termination of pregnancy services and comprehensive sexuality education, should be factored into migration policies and strategies, so as to leave no one behind.

Chairperson

It is imperative to strengthen responses to the particular needs of migrant women of all ages, particularly ensuring that their health needs, labour rights and human rights are respected. A gender perspective should be integrated into all migration management policies and strategies. Article 19 of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Employment and Labour of 2014, includes a clause that refers to

the “...*adoption of measures to provide for the special needs of women, children and youth*”. This article and similar instruments have to be used as a guide for drafting relevant national legislation, policies and strategies that would address the needs of vulnerable groups.

Migration must be addressed through collaborative efforts at regional and international levels. Developing appropriate and equitable policies on migration requires accurate, up to date and reliable data. We should therefore invest in the collection of data on migration as well as making it available.

The protection of the human rights of migrants and their humane and dignified treatment without distinction on any grounds, including sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, must be a fundamental component of development strategies. South Africa for its part has introduced Special Dispensation Permits aimed at creating regular and safe pathways for certain irregular low-skilled migrant workers by regularizing their status through the issuance of work permits that are renewable every five years. This ensures that the rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants are protected and human dignity restored, particularly against all forms of exploitation, abuse and human trafficking.

Chairperson

The South African Government has recently adopted the *White Paper on International Migration* and enacted the *Border Management Act*. These policy and legislative changes will ensure that we engage all our partners to share the responsibility of the management of migration, whilst at the same time balancing the primary imperatives of economic development, national security as well as international and constitutional obligations. The policy and legislation attempts to set out the responsibilities of the State, civil society partners, individual citizens and non-nationals living in South Africa with regard to migration. These critical policy and legislative changes will ensure that South Africa rises to the challenges that emerge while also taking full advantage of opportunities that migration brings.

Chairperson

In conclusion, South Africa's principled position remains that migration, if properly managed, has the ability to serve as a powerful catalyst for development. My Delegation trusts that we shall be able to agree on practical and effective cooperation during this Session, which will enable us to address the population and development challenges that will be discussed during this week, so that we can collectively seize the opportunities offered by international migration, sustainable cities and human mobility.

I thank you.