



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

**STATEMENT TO THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE 51ST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

13 APRIL 2018

Chairperson and distinguished delegates

The South African delegation was ready to join a consensus that recognized that health, among others, is a precondition for and an outcome of economic and social development, and aware that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are central to the realization of social justice and to the achievement of global, regional and national commitments for sustainable development.

We were also ready to agree to recognize the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses and balanced approaches, and also recognizes that international migration is a cross-cutting phenomenon that no one State can manage on its own, and that calls for global approaches and global solutions, as well as the integration of sustainable development, with due regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions, and should be addressed in a balanced manner through a whole-of-government approach and with respect for human rights.

Our delegation wishes to thank you and the members of the Bureau for your tireless work to organise the 51st Session of the CPD. During the past week all of us learnt a lot from the various expert presentations, country statements and other activities that took place, including during the informal consultations.

Chairperson, we now look forward to the regional and global progress reviews of the ICPD Programme of Action, and next year's Session of the CPD. These activities will be very important, and will serve as a demonstration that we are, individually and collectively, really committed to leave no one behind.

I now wish to ask my colleague, Ms Zandi Bhengu, to continue the reading of our statement.

Chairperson, distinguished delegates.

I wish to thank you and the other members of the bureau for the confidence that you placed in me to facilitate the negotiations on the theme resolution for the session.

I was under no illusion that this task would be easy given the global climate on migration. However, I am not one to shy away from responsibility when I am called upon to serve. Despite our divergent views on this issue, we were able to cooperate and work diligently to establish basis for common ground on this critical theme.

I believe we did very well to reach ad ref agreements on many individual paragraphs, as it demonstrates a genuine commitment to try to continue working towards an agreement.

Chairperson and distinguished colleagues. I trust that this year's negotiations, whilst inconclusive, will be judged at some point in the future as a conversation that yielded better mutual understanding on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration. And it is my strong belief that we have laid a good foundation

I wish to thank all the delegations for your support and constructive engagement throughout the negotiations, to try and achieve an agreed outcome.

I particularly wish to express my thanks to all those who assisted me in the sub-thematic facilitation of the negotiations: Ms Yasmin Ali of Singapore, Mr Fernando calvacanti of Brazil, Ms Karine Tardif of Canada, and last but not least Ms Theodora Castan of Ireland. I commend their tireless efforts in assisting me towards finding consensus on difficult issues.

Furthermore, I wish to extend my gratitude to the teams from the Population Division and UNFPA for all the support during this entire process. Your humour made this difficult task bearable. I thank you.

Last but not least, my warmest regards to the members of the civil society who have been with us throughout the process. Thank you for your invaluable support and pragmatic approach to the process when we sometimes fail to think beyond our national positions, while neglecting realities on the ground. Your work does not go unnoticed.

Mr Chair, since I was not able to join my fellow country men and women to mourn the passing of the mother of the South African nation, mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela due to my duties. In her honour, I wish to reiterate my commitment for women's rights, in this context the right to make choices about bodies and reproductive health. I believe the time has come for governments to respect our right to choose.

I thank you!