

GHANA



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STATEMENT

BY

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DURING THE

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COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Madam Chairperson, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this session. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the Statement made on behalf of the Group of 77. Ghana was among the 179 participatory countries that attended the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. Indeed Ghana was elected to chair the Technical Committee that developed the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) and adopted several strategies, policies and programmes in the PoA.

Madam Chairperson, the direction for population management in Ghana is expressed in the National Population Policy, (Revised Edition, 1994). The Revised Policy which, preceded the ICPD-PoA, incorporated emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and environment. It also strengthened issues on Youth and Women. Indeed the National Population Policy, as revised in 1994, had captured most of the principles, strategies and features adopted in the ICPD-PoA and other key international documents on population and sustainable development. Thus issues on reproductive health and rights, gender, population and sustainable development inter-linkages also form the thrust of Ghana's Revised Population Policy. Further, Article 37, Clause 4 of Ghana's Fourth Republican Constitution (1992), which calls for government to maintain a population policy consistent with the aspirations, objectives and development needs of the country, is also in line with the ICPD-PoA.

Improving the quality of life of Ghanaians has always been the primary concern of the Government as can be seen in the various development frameworks of the country. For instance, the main goals of the Vision 2020 was quality of life of all Ghanaians by reducing poverty, raising living standards through a sustained increase in national wealth and a more equitable distribution of benefits therefrom. Similarly, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), which replaced the Vision 2020 aims at ensuring equitable sustainable growth, accelerated poverty reduction and the protection of the vulnerable.

Ghana's development strategies recognize the importance of population management to achieving its goals. Consequently, emphasis is placed on the human resource development and provision of basic social services through addressing issues related to education, skills and entrepreneurship development, HIV/AIDS, health and population management.

In 2004, Ghana realigned its development strategies to major international agreements such as New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which also recognize population management issues as central to economic growth, peace and stability and sustainable development. The realization of the goals ICPD-PoA would to a large extent facilitate the realization of the objectives of NEPAD and MDGs.

Madam Chairperson, Ghana has made a lot of progress in implementing the ICPD PoA. Training Modules on integrating population variables into development plans has been developed and used to build the capacity of Development Planners at the District level. At the National level, the Seven-Year Development Plan that is being finalized has integrated population variables into the plan.

In the area of Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of women, the Government of Ghana has appointed women into very high positions in Ghana. Currently, the Speaker of Parliament, Chief Justice, Attorney-General, Inspector-General of Police and many public sector institutions are headed by women. Enrollment of females at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels has improved significantly. However, we will continue to work to improve the role of women in Governance, especially at the District level.

In the area of health, the Government is implementing policies and programmes to increase access to and enhance quality health service delivery. Model health centers have been established in the districts. In addition, the implementation of the Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) programme is providing integrated health service at the community level.

Madam Chairperson, these measures have resulted in the reduction of infant mortality rate from 119 in 1993 to 111 in 2003. Under five mortality has also decreased from 66 in 1993 to 57 in 2003. However, Maternal Mortality remains a major challenge to the country. Maternal Mortality Rate for the country is 214 per 100,000 life births with disadvantaged areas recording higher rates thereby threatening the country's effort towards meeting the MDG 5 by 2015.

Recognizing this challenge, the Government has come out with a Strategic plan to Reposition Family Planning in the country. The Ministry of Health is also implementing free delivery services for pregnant women. Pilot projects on integrating sexual reproductive health, HIV/AIDS are being implemented. Furthermore, Adolescent Health and Development Programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with NGOs such as Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana and religious bodies.

One other challenge facing the country is the fast rate of urbanization. It has been estimated that by 2010, 52% of Ghana's population would be in the urban areas. The two major factors for this growth are natural increase and migration. Providing shelter as in MDG 7 and other social amenities to meet the growing demands of the urban population will be a challenge to the Government of Ghana. Therefore the Government has been raising awareness on the challenges of urbanization. A Population, Distribution, Urbanization and Development Forum would be held later in the year to highlight these challenges as well as opportunities of urbanization, and recommend the necessary interventions to tackle the issue.

Madam Chairperson, despite this progress, the issues of sustainable funding for population activities, the slow pace of declining fertility and the high levels of infant and maternal mortality are impeding the effective implementation of the PoA.

In conclusion, as we approach the target year of 2015 to achieve the MDGs, the international community especially the United Nations must strengthen its support for developing countries in order to sustain the progress made so far.

I thank you.