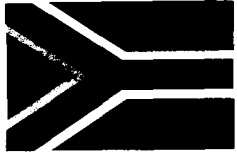


As written



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
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**STATEMENT BY
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DIRECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE**

**32ND SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(CPD)
NEW YORK, 22-23 MARCH 1999**

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23 March 1999

Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

Among the reports being considered at this meeting of the Commission, the South African delegation finds the document “Proposals for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development” a particularly useful and forward-looking piece. We wish to commend the secretariat for its work.

South Africa has made significant strides in creating an enabling environment for the systematic implementation of the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The implementation of this Programme of Action is encapsulated in our new Population Policy.

Because of the strong population control thrust of the population programmes of the previous government, the population growth and structure dynamics have largely been driven by a **swift** demographic transition, more so among the majority African population. This decline in fertility levels occurred without development or improvement of the quality of life and status of women among the majority of the population.

The goal of our Population Policy is to change the determinants of the country’s population dynamics in such a way that these trends are consistent with the achievement of sustainable human development. The policy is informed by the people-centred, gender sensitive and **multi-issue** Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the integrated macro-economic framework, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR). Both of these instruments seek to consciously link sustained economic growth to equity, redistribution and sustainable development. The RDP is a socio-economic policy that sets out various interconnected programmes with the view to meeting the multiple social and economic needs of South **Africans** - such as delivery of health services, education, housing and infrastructure - in order to improve the quality of lives of all South **Africans** in an equitable manner.

GEAR complements the RDP by laying out an integrated economic strategy for economic restructuring, investment growth, sustainable job creation and redistribution of wealth created.

Chairperson,

The greatest challenge facing my country, from the perspective of our deliberations, has been the lack of up-to-date and reliable population data. Previous censuses tended to be ideologically biased and the analytical research methodologies were highly questionable. The first truly national census was undertaken in 1996. The results show that the total population size is 40.5 million with a 2.06 per cent annual growth rate. This rate is expected to drop to 1.72 per cent by 2006.

Forty-six per cent of South Africans live in rural areas. The population consists of 77 per cent Africans, 9 per cent Coloureds, 3 per cent Asians and 11 per cent Whites. About one in every three persons (36 percent) is below the age of 15 years, 60 per cent are in the adulthood ages of 15-64 years and 5 per cent are elderly. By and large this shows that South Africa's population is youthful, more so among Africans and Coloureds.

Government is currently in the process of a thorough analysis of the census. The findings will enable us to have a more accurate perspective on the magnitude of the challenges that face development planning, service delivery and population programmes, particularly with regard to children, youth and the elderly.

The Population **Policy** views the prevailing population growth and structural dynamics as a concern, relative to the growth and capacity of the economy to cope with the backlogs in employment, education, housing, health and other social services in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. The combination of the current rate of population growth, the

2.7 per cent labour force growth rate and the economic growth rate of below 1 per cent calls for integrated actions to encourage investment, create jobs and invest in future generations.

South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world. Of the seventeen per cent of the people who are classified as ultra poor, 95 per cent are African, mostly concentrated in female-headed households and rural areas. Annual income earnings of male-headed households are about twice that of female-headed households.

The removal of barriers to women's full participation in society, women's accessibility to productive resources and institutional and legislative reforms are viewed by my government as top priorities for all poverty alleviation and equity programmes in the country.

I wish to take this opportunity to present some of the highlights of our Country Report regarding the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action:

- ◆ a poverty relief and infrastructure investment fund, amounting to over **US\$1 00** million for 1998/1999 has been established, with additional funds to the value of nearly **US\$200** million per year in the next three financial years
- ◆ free basic health care to pregnant and lactating mothers and children under the age of six years
- ◆ the new Child Support Grant targets children in poor households regardless of race
- ◆ an electrification programme has consistently exceeded the annual target of 450 000 connections since 1996
- ◆ by 1997 over 14 000 primary schools, with 4.9 million pupils, were reached through a nutrition programme
- ◆ three million South Africans who were previously under serviced now benefit **from** the Community Water Supply and Sanitation

Project

- ◆ the 1998 Presidential Jobs Summit in which government, **labour**, the private sector and civil society reached a consensus and committed themselves to collaboratively initiate anti-poverty programmes, boost the demand for local products, job security, small business development and special programmes for women and youth.

South Africa views reproductive health and reproductive rights in the broadest, most integrated terms. Reproductive health services are provided within the primary health care framework. Our landmark achievement in this regard is the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1996, which came into effect in February 1997. To date close on 50 000 women have accessed the service, which includes before and **after counselling** and **post-abortion** contraception. Maternal mortality has been declared a notifiable event in order to monitor preventable causes of death during pregnancy.

Colleagues,

The reproductive health needs of adolescents and youth are a concern for us. Despite the 4.2 to 3.2 decline in total fertility rate between 1980 and 1995, the proportion of teenage mothers remains unacceptably high at around 15 per cent. Furthermore, African infant and maternal mortality rates - at 40 per 1 000 and 250 per 100 000, respectively - demand fully fledged and comprehensive interventions.

HIV/AIDS is a phenomenon of epidemic proportions. The infection rate of 1 600 a day is among the highest in the world. It is increasingly the disease of the poor and the youth. An average of 16 per cent women attending antenatal clinics and 30 per cent of children in **paediatric** care at tertiary institutions are infected. Its devastating impact on the family unit and the macro economic and demographic dynamics of the country has culminated in, inter alia, the Interministerial Partnership Against HIV/AIDS, an

initiative led by the Office of the Deputy President. The recognition by the South African government that HIV/AIDS is not just a health threat but a social concern, is a notable and commendable point of departure for the national agenda.

Chairperson,

My government **recognises** the crucial role of the non-governmental community and civil society-based organisations in all the facets of economic growth and sustainable human development. Indeed these social partnerships have been fruitful from policy making right through to our work on systematic policy implementation. These partners represent the critical interface with the communities we exist to serve.

Within the population and development framework, for example, we are initiating a partnership under the auspices of the Working for Water Programme. This programme seeks to enhance water security through control of alien vegetation, while creating jobs and skills in the process. Providing reproductive and basic health care, HIV/AIDS education and food security will be integrated into this programme on the basis of intergovernmental and civil society partnerships. Government's role will be to facilitate the integration of reproductive health interventions by the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa into the work of all the ten Departments involved.

South Africa is revitalising and improving its social security provisions and has embarked on a programme to protect the human rights and promote the cultural integration of older persons in our society. Currently 2.9 million of our 40.5 million people receive a social grant (old age pension, disability **grant**, child support and foster care grants, care dependency grant), which has a poverty alleviation impact for approximately 7 million people.

Chairperson,

Allow me to state here that the first five years in our implementation of the Programme of Action have largely entailed the creation of an enabling environment through policy formulation. After extensive piloting of development projects throughout the country, we are gearing ourselves up for comprehensive policy implementation across all the social and economic sectors. We do **recognise** that the impact of our attempts will not be maximised without accurate population and development information, appropriate information systems, the capacity to integrate population strategies into development programmes and properly designed monitoring and evaluation systems. These we will strengthen within the context of dynamic intergovernmental and government/civil society partnerships.

I thank you for your attention.