

**STATEMENT TO THE 52ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT:**

ON THE

**“REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE FOLLOW-UP
AND REVIEW OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT”,**

01-05 APRIL 2019

DELIVERED BY:

**HER EXCELLENCY: MS SUSAN SHABANGU,
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates

Allow me to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election and to thank you as well as the Secretariat, for the preparations and organisation of this session. Our deliberations this week will not only allow us to take stock of the progress we have made, but will also provide us with an opportunity to plan how to improve on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 25th anniversary of the ICPD takes place in a world characterised by the rise in extremism, the resurgence of national populism and authoritarian ideologies, intolerance towards diversity, the undermining of multilateralism and outright rejection of and regression from internationally agreed norms, principles and standards, which further delay us from achieving the full and effective implementation of the Program of Action.

The consensus that bound us in Cairo was informed by our common aspiration to see a world where child birth did not threaten the right to life; a world in which investments in education, health services and social development, in particular for vulnerable populations were encouraged; and the pursuit of safe and orderly migration, were recognised as necessary pillars for achieving sustainable development.

The stark contradictions in our articulations, whereby on one hand we decry slow progress in the area of maternal health and infant mortality, while on the

other hand we reject all necessary strides to provide essential healthcare services, in particular sexual and reproductive health services aimed at addressing this challenge.

Access to health care, including reproductive healthcare is a constitutionally recognized right, under section 27 of the South African Constitution. The South African Constitutional Court has linked the realization of socio-economic rights to the right to life and adequate standard of living. It enjoins the 'state to take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights' on a non-discrimination basis.

Furthermore, the South African government is committed to achieving universal health coverage through the National Health Insurance (NHI), which has reformed the financing of the country's healthcare in order to increase the quality of and access to healthcare services, paying particular attention to the SRHR needs of adolescents, youth, older persons, LGBTQI persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous people, especially in the most remote areas.

Chairperson,

South Africa recognises the nexus between migration and development, hence we have introduced the new international migration policy that is based on a whole of government and society approach. South Africa remains home to many migrants and has adopted progressive and targeted policies aimed at safe, orderly and regular migration.

We are cognisant that the **mismanagement** of international migration has the potential to affect social cohesion, particularly exacerbated by socioeconomic disparities in poor communities. However, governments have the primary responsibility to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of **All** migrants, including by strongly denouncing and taking action to eliminate all forms of intolerance and discrimination towards them.

South Africa is not spared from this challenge as is evident by the current spate of violence against foreign nationals and their properties in some parts of our country. The South African Government strongly condemns violence and all criminal activities perpetrated against foreign nationals residing in South Africa, and has called for strong action by police and other law enforcement agencies.

Chairperson,

Harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in young people has been recognised by the African Union as key for Africa's development and the achievement of the continental Agenda 2063. At home, South Africa's youthful population has called for more investment in quality basic education, including comprehensive sexuality education to equip the youth to participate in the economy of the country. Accordingly, the South African Government continues to prioritise investments in infrastructure, entrepreneurship and job creation as a response to this call and to strategically place us on the right path to reap the demographic dividend.

Furthermore, in line with our commitments enshrined in the National Development Plan, efforts to address inequality and access to resources and basic services remain a key priority for the South African government. The

numerous poverty alleviation programmes that address income, human capital and asset poverty resulted in more South Africans today having access to (for example) some form of household income (even if only in the form of social grants), formal housing, piped water, electricity and decent sanitation. In addition, the government investments in education, health services, social development, as well as social assistance to vulnerable households and individuals and contributory social security, public transport, housing and local amenities has played a notable role in the efforts to reduce poverty, and they account for close to 60% of government spending. The country aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through the implementation of the National Development Plan.

Chairperson,

South Africa joins others in supporting the Political Declaration presented by the Chair to reaffirm our commitment to the political agenda set out in the Cairo Program of Action, and regrets that we were unable to find consensus on key thematic areas in the recent sessions of the Commission. We are hopeful that this anniversary will serve as a catalyst for member states to work hard at ensuring that the Commission continues to play its role in giving political support to the mandate of the UNFPA as well as the Secretary-General in assisting member states with the full implementation of ICPD and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are further committed to the Addis Ababa Declaration, which sets a forward-looking political agenda and context for Africa on population and development matters. I thank you.