

Madame Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates

I am honoured to speak on behalf of my country, Saint Lucia, known for its sun, sea, and sand; our warmth and hospitality, not to mention our most important resource – our people. Like other peoples of our region Saint Lucians are known for our creativity and resilience. With a population of just over 160,000, Saint Lucia boasts of having the highest number of Noble Laureates per capita in the world.

We welcome this opportunity to address the **42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development** and acknowledge and thank the Secretariat for its hard work in presenting the documents submitted for our consideration.

Saint Lucia is pleased to be associated with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China, which inter alia emphasized the need for debt relief, fairer terms of trade, the need for enhancement of technical and financial support to developing countries including in the field of capacity building.

We wish to reiterate our agreement with others who spoke before us on the importance of monitoring the world's population because of population's impact on economic development. As in our country human capital is a great resource, and people are the engine of economic development. Accordingly, we would like to emphasize the importance of combating poverty,

investing in education and human resource development. How many potential Nobel Laureates never were able to contribute to society as fully as they could have simply because of poverty, lack of investment in education – and failure to develop human resources? It is here where money should be invested in building a healthy populace.

Investing in human resources also means taking affirmative steps toward ending discrimination be it of race or sex. We must recognize the contribution that women make to our families, and to society at large. Recognition of the role of the family as the “basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened “, entitled to receive “protection and support” was clearly stated in Principle 9 of the **International Conference on Population and Development** and we must not forget this.

Investing in human resources also means investing in education and the environment. Educated people have the means to care for the environment and the skills to take measures against all other practices that really harm the environment.

Empowerment of women includes the implementation - and I want to emphasise implementation of flexible working conditions for working mothers, to ensure that they are more able to fulfill responsibilities in the family.

More healthy populations means recommitment to *MDG No.4, The Reduction of Child Mortality, and MDG No. 5, The Improvement of Maternal Health*. This means investing in

health care, assisting expectant mothers, pre-natal, new born and infant children, in order to achieve healthy outcomes for both mother and child. This means investment to ensure universal access to skilled birth attendants at delivery, emergency obstetric care for women and emergency neo-natal care.

A commitment to population and development means HIV testing for pregnant mothers: Saint Lucia has been very successful in reducing substantially mother to child HIV/AIDS transmission simply by investing the money in testing for all expectant mothers and treatment for those who need it.

Saint Lucia has also seen a steady decline in the teenage pregnancy rate. We have done this through our Health and Family Life Education Programme consistent with the ICPD Programme of Action, which emphasizes abstinence until marriage and fidelity afterwards. This education must also be reinforced. We have invested in continuing education programs for teenage mothers, with an aim at arresting the poverty cycle and repeat pregnancies out of wedlock. We also invest in programs for young men, so that they will learn to be responsible fathers committed to their wives and children, and always respectful of women.

In conclusion, Madam, I wish to reiterate that our people are our greatest resource. This is true not only in Saint Lucia, land of the Nobel Laureate, but the world over.

I thank you.