



Republic of Zambia

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. DR. MWABA KASESE – BOTA
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

48TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Realizing the future we want – integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post – 2015 development agenda

Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Zambian delegation, I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Zambia associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Niger on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation acknowledges and thanks the Secretary General for the comprehensive reports under this agenda item, which has provided greater insights into the subject matter and serves as a very useful document to further guide discussions during the session. Zambia particularly applauds the reports' emphasis on streamlining efforts to improve the quality of life of the present generation in a broader and inclusive manner without compromising on the ability of future generations to meet their needs..

Chairperson,

The Government of the Republic of Zambia further acknowledges the significance of integrating population issues as espoused in the ICPD 94, into sustainable development and the Post 2015 development agenda, as they are fundamentally reposed to enhance the well being of both the current and the future populations. Zambia has therefore prioritized the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of action in its National Development Plans.

Zambia's current and projected population characteristics further present potential opportunities and challenges to effectively contextualize sustainable development agenda in the national planning processes. The country's fertility

rates are high though slowly declining. This trend has resulted into a rapidly growing and youthful population with about 45 per cent being below the age of 15. The focus therefore, is to design appropriate policies to harness this youthful population dividend so as to help spur the desired developmental outcomes. It is therefore critical that the post 2015 development agenda encompasses appropriate measures sufficient to yield and harness demographic dividend. The Post 2015 DA should endeavor to have investments in quality education, family planning and universal access to quality health services as interventions positive demographic dividend outcomes.

Zambia undertook a demographic dividend study whose results will help inform successful national development plans. Given our population outlook, the strategic focus is to reduce the prevailing high fertility and mortality rates so as to graduate the youthful and dependent population into a productive one, whilst putting in place economic policies that will avail opportunities for the anticipated productive population to exploit by matching skills supply to labour market demands for the youth, women and men.

Chairperson

Zambia intends to build on the already existing momentum of sustained economic growth of above 6.1 percent over the last decade, as part of its strength and opportunity to address challenges that hampered the attainment of some of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Zambia's Post-2015 development agenda will therefore, prioritize a harmonious balance between social development, inclusive economic development and environmental sustainability; taking into consideration their interdependent relationship with the country's population dynamics.

Chairperson

Zambia has recognized the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and has stressed that development cannot take place without measures addressing the fundamental gender issues. The right to autonomy requires measures to guarantee the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, and the right to access sexual and reproductive health information and services with the consent of the individual.

Zambia like many other countries has made tremendous progress in bringing down the maternal mortality ratios, albeit significantly high. Both maternal and child mortalities represent some of the unfinished business of the MDGs. Zambia therefore calls for collective effort to mobilizing all necessary interventional measures sufficient to get us to zero preventable deaths for women and girls, including calls for efforts to eliminate HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the provisions of among other things family planning, safe abortion and post abortion care, maternity care, timely diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV), breast and reproductive cancers, and infertility; as well as access to accurate and comprehensive information about sexuality and reproduction, which confer the right to sexual and reproductive health, should be supported.

The right to enter freely into marriage is also critical and Zambia has put up measures to ban and eliminate the practice of Early, Forced and Child Marriages, which often lead to early pregnancies that often risk the life and /or health of girls including obstetric fistulae, which contribute to significant morbidity in young girls and women. In this connection, Zambia and Canada have been Co- sponsoring a resolution on Early, Forced and Child Marriages which was adopted without a vote by the General Assembly.

Chairperson,

As the International Community continues to collaborate effort in combating infectious diseases, equal attention should be given to non-communicable diseases as a global health challenge, and as we witness increased mortality and loss of productivity due to heart diseases, diabetes and hypertension among others. The Post 2015 agenda should therefore embrace health of populations in totality and comprehensively.

Chairperson

In conclusion, Zambia reiterates the need for the Post-2015 framework to give priority to core goals and targets of gender equality, empowerment of women, investment in young people, inclusive economic growth and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; as true meaning of integrating population matters into sustainable development including in the post 2015 development agenda.

I thank you.