



***Check against delivery***

STATEMENT

BY

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**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

AT THE

**49TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

ON THE THEME:

**"STRENGTHENING THE DEMOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE  
POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA"**

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**Madam Chair, distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

I wish to congratulate you on your election as chair of this august gathering, and have no doubt that with your distinguished stewardship, we will achieve greater milestone on our collective drive to achieve the objectives of the ICPD Program of Action and the Agenda 2030 respectively.

The Gambia wishes to align itself to the statements delivered by Uganda on behalf of the African Group and China and Thailand on behalf of Group 77.

Madam Chair, the theme "**Strengthening the Demographic Evidence Base for the Post 2015 Development Agenda**" is indeed apt and timely as demographic data is important for tracking and monitoring the progress towards the attainment of both the ICPD Program of Action and Agenda 2030.

The Gambia over the years continues to demonstrate its commitment towards the production of timely and reliable demographic data which is important for development planning and programming at all levels. The country has conducted five successful censuses since independence with the most recent being the 2013 population and housing census which for the first time included questions on agriculture, Information and communication Infrastructure. A Demographic Health Survey conducted in 2013 provided data on not only demographic and health indicators but also on other socio-economic indicators. The Gambia also continues to institutionalize the conduct of essential household surveys like the Integrated Household survey, Multi Cluster Indicator Survey, Micronutrient survey, Labour force sample field survey, reproductive health commodity security survey and the economic census, which are all geared towards the provision of a multi-setoral data relevant for the provision of baseline data for the monitoring of development indicators.

Madam chair, in our effort to provide big data, the GIS unit of the Gambia Bureau of Statistics and the National Environment Agency were strengthened to provide Geographic Information System to add more information to the location of buildings and settlements in a more accurate and comprehensive manner.

The Gambia also continues to strengthen the vital and civil registration systems to ensure that data on population and development is obtained and used. To this end, the institutional and technical capacities of the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Ministries of Interior, Health and Justice, Gambia Immigration Department were strengthened to collect, analyse and disseminate data on birth, death, marriages, immigration and emigration etc.

Madam chair, my delegation believe that strengthening institutional and technical capacity has to go in tandem with the formulation of relevant strategies, policies and legislations. It is against this background that the National strategy for the development of statistics and policies such as the National population, reproductive health, youth, gender and social protection and legislations such as the sexual offence and domestic violence acts are all in place to make sure that people are at the centre of development and that the rights of the vulnerable are advanced and protected at all times.

Madam chair, the November 2015 Presidential Declaration by **His Excellency the President Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya AJJ Jammeh** to ban FGM in the Gambia and the swift move by the legislature to enact legislation criminalizing the practice is a step in the right direction towards the protection of the girl child. We are therefore happy to report that the Government and development partners like the UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF country office are working together to develop a National Program on FGM/C.

**Madam Chair,**

As noted in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the combined effect of fertility control and advancement of health care services in the Gambia is beginning to give rise to ageing. In preparing to handle this emerging demographic trend, the Gambia Government through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has formulated the social protection policy and action plan geared towards addressing the needs and aspirations of the elderly. Similarly, a conducive working environment has been put in place that motivates Non-governmental organisations to work with the elderly in a bid to make them healthier and productive with advancing ages.

**Madam Chair, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

Despite the gains mentioned above, The Gambia, continues to face challenges in her effort to strengthen the demographic evidence base for the post 2015 development agenda. Key among these include the rapid population growth rate of 3.1 in 2013, high population density of 174 persons per square kilometre, adolescent fertility resulting in unwanted pregnancies, illegal migration and the prevalence of sexual transmitted infections including HIV and Aids. Moreover, funding remains a challenge in our drive to conduct a **migration and time use survey** for the provision of intercensal data on migration to complement the generic and limited census questions on migration. Data from time use survey will also help policy makers to appreciate the contribution of domestic work to GDP among other things.

**In conclusion Madam Chair,**

I wish to on behalf of The Gambia Government and my delegation profusely thank the UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, PPD and all other development partners for their continuous support to population and development in The Gambia.

**Thank you very much, merci beacoup, zaka khaira, balsowayee spaciba, cheche, muchas gracias.**