



STATEMENT

**H.E. THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
GAMBIA**

DR. ISATOU TOURAY

**ON THE OCCASION OF
55TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

THEME:

**POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, IN
PARTICULAR SUSTAINED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

25TH -29TH APRIL, 2022

**Mr. Chairman,
Members of the Commission,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset allow me to express our appreciation to the Chair and the bureau of the CPD for organizing this session of the CPD. We are ready to join other delegations in the sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learnt in the implementation of ICPD POA in the context of population and sustainable development.

We know that, there are clear linkages between population growth, sustainable development and inclusive economic and sustained growth that deserve utmost attention and collaboration as they are key for the attainment of ICPD PoA, SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Meaningful action begins with giving due attention to addressing changes in population trends which have far reaching consequences on macroeconomic growth, fiscal sustainability, inequalities and social inclusion, particularly in times when we are gradually emerging from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Changes in population trends and patterns are crucial variables that shape the growth dynamics of a country.

In recognition of the potentials in young people as key drivers for harnessing the demographic dividend and inclusive growth, the Government of The Gambia has prioritized strategies and implemented initiatives to support young people in the National Development Plan 2018-2021 and other national blue prints.

We have established the National Youth Council and formulated the National Youth Policy (2019-2028) with a view to enabling the young people reach their full potentials. Through these efforts, many young people have been trained on important skills for gainful employment and have received startup capitals to start businesses and create jobs for others.

As Gambia is one of the countries of origin of irregular migration to Europe from West Africa, the Government of the Gambia has formulated a migration policy, established a coordination mechanism and supporting sectoral coordination structures and instituted strategies to make migration safe, regular and orderly.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

We can all agree that for economic growth to be truly inclusive, it must create decent work and productive employment opportunities for both women and men, especially for women given the conservative nature of our society and it must recognize and value general housework and direct care.

In this connection, The Gambia created a new Gender Ministry, promulgated the Women's Act, and the Gender Policy to fight Violence against women and girls at local, regional and national levels. The Government also enacted the Disability Act and a Women Enterprise Development Fund Bill to improve the socioeconomic status of women.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

We remain cognizant of the fact that changing population trends has implications on environmental sustainability, the availability of water and land. We are aware that women are mostly victims of this problem because majority of them are into agricultural and horticultural activities to earn their living.

The Government, therefore, continues to support climate-friendly agricultural initiatives, including modern farming methods to help improve the condition of women, especially, those living in poor and rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The Gambia also made significant strides in fulfilling the promises of Cairo, achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063. However, significant challenges still remain. The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic is impeding these achievements in various ways.

The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our health care system, socioeconomic fragility, and fiscal sustainability with adverse impacts on our efforts to nurture sustained and inclusive economic growth.

The Gambia's economy is tax-based, making the economy very susceptible to shocks and the pandemic in particular has severely contracted its growth rate. In these uncertain times, diversification is seen as key to effective resource mobilization and by extension, paramount to attaining a sustained and inclusive growth.

This would require making all sectors viable and lucrative to attract hefty multilateral investments in the country. Nevertheless, through our renewed commitment to structural reforms, real GDP is projected to pick up gradually, growing by 3.2% in 2021 and 5.1% in 2022.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The recently concluded Gambia Demographic and Health survey 2019/2020 has revealed that significant progress has been made on the three transformative zeros; there is improvement in Family Planning both in new acceptors and use.

Progress has also been made on the maternal mortality ratio which declined from 433 in 2013 to 289 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019/2020; stunting has decreased from 25% to 18% as well as wasting from 12% to 5%. Within the same period, Total Fertility Rate has also declined from 5.6 births per woman to 4.4 births.

The Government also placed poverty reduction high on its development agenda. We are currently implementing the structural reforms and projects outlined in the NDP and formulating a new Green Recovery-focused NDP with a view to addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic as well as accelerate and sustain growth in order to improve the well-being of our people.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The Government of The Gambia is strongly committed to the ICPD PoA, the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063 and the common agenda of this commission; this is staunchly anchored on our belief and conviction that progress in these commitments will certainly lead to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

Currently, The Gambia is finalizing its National Population Policy 2022 and has developed the National Social Protection Policy (2015-2025).

These are all geared towards an inclusive, integrated and comprehensive social protection system that will effectively provide protective, preventive, promotional and transformative measures to safeguard the lives of all vulnerable groups in The Gambia and contribute to broader human development and dignity, greater economic productivity and inclusive growth.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates

In conclusion, on behalf of the President and the Government and People of The Gambia, I wish to thank all member countries for recently electing The Gambia to the Commission.

I wish to once again reiterate our commitment to the ICPD POA. We will continue to collaborate and use various south-south cooperation means to ensure the successful implementation of the POA.

I thank you for your kind attention.