



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

333 East 38th Street
9th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 213-5583
Fax: (212) 692-2498
E-mail: pmun@southafrica-newyork.net

**STATEMENT
BY**

**MR. ZANE DANGOR
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**TO THE
41st SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT:
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, URBANIZATION,
INTERNAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

Allow us to congratulate you and the Members of the Bureau of the 41st Session of the Commission on Population and Development on your election, and to thank you for your leadership role in the preparations for this session. We also wish to thank the Secretary General, through the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for the very useful materials that were developed to inform and guide our deliberations. In this regard we also wish to thank the United Nations Population Fund for the production of last year's report on the state of the world's population, titled *Unleashing the potential of urban growth*, and the accompanying *Youth supplement: Growing up urban*. These reports were excellent resource materials for our country's preparations for this week's meeting.

Chairperson, whilst presenting this statement, we also wish to align ourselves to the statement that was delivered by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbados on behalf of the G77 and China.

Distinguished colleagues, South Africa remains as committed as always to the work of this Commission. We regard it as the most important vehicle through which to annually monitor and evaluate our collective progress towards achieving the objectives of the *ICPD Programme of Action* (1994) and the *Key Actions* (agreed on in 1999). The annual meetings of the Commission also present an opportunity to build on these important agreements by considering more recent international population and development trends, and subsequent agreements. This includes the *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium* (2001), and particularly, the Millennium Development Goals. Our country remains committed to the implementation and achievement of these and related important multilateral agreements in the ambit of population and development.

Last year our country hosted and participated in the Fifth General Assembly of the African Population Commission of the African Union, and fully supported its outcome document, the *Johannesburg Declaration*. We also hosted (with the support of the African Union, the UNFPA, and UNESCO's MOST Programme) an international conference on *Population and Development in Africa: Research and Policy Dialogue for Action*, which produced the *Mafikeng Declaration* with the same title. The *Mafikeng Declaration* was endorsed by the African Union in the *Johannesburg Declaration*. We regard these as important elaborations of Africa's *Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development* of 1992, and the *Ministerial Declaration of the ICPD at Ten Africa Regional Review* of 2004, both of which we remain committed to. Equally, the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development's *Enhanced Framework of Implementation and Related Outputs* (2005) remains an important vehicle to guide sector responses to our continent's urbanisation challenges.

We remain equally committed to the promotion of sub-regional population and development activities, and continue to collaborate with southern African governments in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to implement and elaborate SADC's 2004 *Maputo Resolutions of the Southern African Ministers' Conference on Population and Development*.

South Africa is proud to announce that we were admitted as the 23rd member of the Partners in Population and Development: a South – South Initiative, and fully align ourselves with the Partners' 2007 *Rabat Declaration on Universal Access to Reproductive Health for the Attainment of the ICPD Goals and MDGs*.

Chairperson and distinguished delegates, we believe that this week's deliberations on population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development are very important, because migration and its management are central to human development. Our ability to respond to the challenges posed by

these trends, and to exploit their development potential, would certainly assist us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Our policies, strategies and programmes are underpinned by a set of principles within our constitution. Our country's *Bill of Rights*, which is contained in the Constitution (*Act 108 of 1996*), "enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom." As such, our Constitution enshrines the freedom and security of every person, including the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right to make decisions concerning reproduction and to security in and control over their body. Our *Bill of Rights* also provides for freedom of movement and residence, including that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and every citizen has the right to enter, to remain in and to reside anywhere in the country. We are consistently mindful of the fact that gender discrimination, xenophobia, racism and exclusionary practices based on economic status can undermine these rights. We need to remain vigilant and responsive to such forms of discrimination and ensure that we develop policies and approaches to sustainable development that will foster inclusion and promote social cohesion.

Our *Population Policy* (1998) includes a major strategy on migration and urbanization, which seeks to "increase alternative choices to migration from rural to urban areas through the provision of social services, infrastructure and better employment opportunities in the rural areas within the context of rural development programmes and strategies", whilst simultaneously "reducing backlogs in urban infrastructure and social services, and making adequate provision for future increases in the population living in urban areas." Our country's *National Spatial Development Perspective* (2001) promotes the use of government resources to enable people to be mobile to places where they can live better, particularly in so far as economic and employment opportunities are concerned.

Our constitution and local government legislation promotes integrated development planning across the three spheres of government, to support the population policy's goal of sustainable human development. Local government has to develop and annually update five-year strategic Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) for their areas of jurisdiction, which consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of their work. Local, provincial and national plans have to be vertically and horizontally integrated.

Chairperson,

South Africa's population is estimated at 48.5 million, and our national population density is 39,8 persons per km². The population's distribution is highly uneven, affected by a historical aberration of apartheid management of population and the resultant geographies of uneven economic development. Our urbanization rate increased from 53,7% in 1996 to 61% in 2001, and 20% of the population of our major cities were 'recent in-migrants' (i.e. people who had not resided there in 1996). However, natural increase remains a key consideration for urban population growth. Demographically, our urban populations tend to include proportionally more young adults and other persons of economically active age, whereas the rural populations include proportionally more children and older persons (the so-called dependent age groups).

Indications are that the HIV/Aids epidemic in the country has reached its plateau. Its geographic spread remains diverse: in certain parts of the country it is more prevalent in rural areas, and in other parts its occurrence is markedly urban. Most research confirms that the internal migration of men, especially labour migration and short term migration (for example along major transport routes) are important drivers of the spread of the epidemic.

In terms of gender, our urban population is predominantly male, whilst many rural areas have a female population that is up to 10% higher than the male

population. Also, women in rural areas tend to experience lower levels of education than their urban counterparts, and consequently higher fertility rates.

Our democratic government has prioritized access to social services since 1994, to address spatial inequalities. Today, we practically enjoy universal attendance of primary schools, and a secondary school enrolment rate of about 90%.

Proportionally more girls attend school than boys. Also, all South Africans now live within 5 kilometres of a primary health care facility, which includes reproductive health services. About 25% of the country's population receive non-contributory social assistance grants, particularly child support, old age and disability grants. These grants have contributed to virtually eliminating absolute poverty amongst older persons, and to reducing income inequality in the country. The majority of grant recipients live in rural areas.

People's access to household-based services, including water and sanitation, electricity and housing has improved significantly in the past fourteen years, both in urban and rural areas. Since 1994, our government has provided 2.3 million houses including basic services, thus providing security of tenure and access to shelter to 9 million poor people. Of this figure around 70 percent of houses were constructed in urban areas. Over 31 million people have access to basic free water. 73 percent of households in urban and rural areas, 80 percent of schools and 95 percent of clinics have been electrified. This has resulted in improved quality of life, stimulation of social and economic activity in rural areas and the creation of jobs. Female-headed households in rural areas have benefited proportionally more from the expansion of services than male headed households, thereby reducing the wide gap that existed prior to 1994.

Cities are the areas of most rapid economic growth in South Africa. According to the *State of the Cities Report 2006*, the country's five largest cities provided 44% of the national number of jobs, and make the most significant contributions to the national economy (55% of national Geographic Value Add in manufacturing, 61%

of national GVA in trade, 75% of GVA in financial, real estate and business services, and 53% of GVA community, social and personal services). There is a correlation between urban driven economies, the economic opportunities they produce and the resultant growth of those localities in population terms, and a discrepancy with the skills that the rural poor possess. However, the report also indicates that according to 2001 statistics, 77.31% of people living below the minimum living level are located with a 60 km radius of areas that generate at least R1 billion (US\$ 125 million) of GVA per annum. We are therefore faced in South Africa with what are essentially a spatially divided economy, the first economy which is well-developed and sufficiently resourced, and the second economy, which is characterized by poverty, lack of skills, lack of economic opportunity, and unemployment. The challenge that faces us now is how to bridge this divide.

Chairperson and distinguished colleagues, we have accepted the rational migratory behaviour of people fuelled by the desire to be productive and constructive in their own lives and therefore to collective society. In 2004 (after a comprehensive review 10 years of democracy) the government developed a *Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Human Settlements*. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that we need to do more than merely provide a housing/shelter solution. Instead we henceforth focus on making the housing subsidy programme a strategy for the creation of assets, responding to the specific and changing demographics of each city/ town/ region, and seeking local solutions through public consultation.

Chairperson and distinguished delegates, to summarise. An analysis of our population's distribution, internal migration and urbanisation points to a great diversity in challenges and development opportunities. We hope that the experiences and lessons that we have shared with you today, and will continue sharing in the course of the week, provide useful insights. Similarly, we also look forward to learning from the experiences of other countries.

We trust that this week's deliberations will yield an outcome that will propel the international community forward towards the achievement of the *ICPD Programme of Action's* objective to promote equitable and ecologically sustainable development of all areas, "with particular emphasis on the promotion of economic, social and gender equity based on respect for human rights, especially the right to development."

Chairperson, in this regard we wish to assure you of our commitment to actively engage with all our partners, and to play a constructive role in negotiating a substantive resolution that will positively build on the objectives and actions of the *ICPD Programme of Action* and the *Key Actions*.

Thank you.