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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**NATIONAL EXPERIENCE  
IN MEETING THE GOALS AND  
OBJECTIVES RELATED TO ADOLESCENTS AND  
YOUTH SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE ICPD**

PRESENTED

AT THE

**45<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**Mr. Chairman,**

It is indeed great pleasure for me and the delegation from Kenya to attend this 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. I would like to join the distinguished speakers before me in congratulating you and the new members of the Bureau for having been elected to the respective positions. I wish you well as you steer the sessions.

We are indeed honoured by this opportunity to share the Kenyan experience in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action's recommendations on issues of the **Adolescents and the Youth**.

### **Structure of Adolescents and Youth in Kenya**

In Kenya, adolescents are defined as those aged 10-19 years while the youth are those aged 15 to 35 years. According to the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census results, the population of young people aged 15-24 account for 21 per cent of the total population. The broader age group 15-35 defined as the "**Youth**" account for about 38 per cent. Over the last 40 years, the absolute size of the youthful population aged 15-24 grew almost four-fold from about 2 million in 1969 to about 8 million in 2009 and is likely to continue growing rapidly due to the past persistent high fertility rates.

The proportion of young people living in urban areas in Kenya has also almost doubled over the last decade. The proportions of the youth aged 15- 24 and 15 – 35 now form about 23 and 45% respectively of the total urban population. The results of the recent surveys undertaken in Kenya indicate that adolescent fertility rate has been declining. However, their contribution to the overall Total Fertility Rate continued to increase due to their large numbers and accounted for about 40 percent in 2008.

### **Progress in Implementing ICPD Programme of Action**

The Government of Kenya has been committed in implementation of ICPD Programme of Action with regard to adolescents and the youth. Kenya's progress is presented within the ICPD framework in the three broad areas as follows:

#### ***1. Meeting the needs and aspirations of youth***

Kenya is happy to report that since 1994 Cairo Conference, the Government in collaboration with various stake holders has achieved the following:

- Establishment of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- Development of a National Youth Policy in 2006 that provides the framework for youth development programmes across the country
- Development of a National Population Policy for Sustainable Development in 2000 which included issues facing youth. The 2012 revised Population Policy already approved by Cabinet also addresses youth issues.
- Allocation of funds in the national budget to provide free sanitary pads to schoolgirls from poor areas.

- Introduction of free primary school education in 2003 and subsidized secondary school education in 2008

As a result of these measures Kenya has recorded a number of notable successes. For instance, in education sector, there has been marked improvement in school enrollments. Primary school enrollments rose from 6.1 million in 2002 to 9.4 million in 2010. Completion rates at primary school level increased to 77 per cent in 2010. In addition 6 out of 10 students who finish primary school continue onto secondary school. The main challenge has been inadequate resources for implementation.

## ***2. Governments formulating training and employment programmes for the youth***

Kenya has achieved the following:

- Establishment of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund
- Launch of the Kazi Kwa Vijana (Work for Youth) programme, aiming to employ youth in labour intensive public works projects
- Establishment of the Women Enterprise Fund in 2007 to facilitate women's access to credit

Although the economy has been creating about 500,000 jobs annually, this has not been adequate to cater for the rising youth population. About a quarter of the youth population in Kenya today are unemployed. In addition, out of the 13.5 million youths in Kenya, slightly more than half live in poverty.

## ***3. Involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities***

Kenya is happy to report that the Government has put in place the following:

- Establishment of a Youth Parliament
- Development of National Gender and Development Policy in 2000
- Outlawing of child marriages in response to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW and Enactment of the Children's Act in 2001
- New Employment Act, No. 11 of 2007 which expressly prohibits discrimination and harassment of actual and prospective employees on the basis of sex
- Development of an Adolescent Reproductive Health and Development Policy and its Plan of Action in 2005
- Establishment of the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADA)

These interventions have resulted into the following:

- Parity index in primary and secondary schools enrollment rising from 0.85 and 0.95 in 2007 to 0.86 and 0.97 in 2010, respectively

- The patterns of pregnancies and motherhood among age group 15-19 have slightly improved since 1993, from 17 per cent to 15 per cent in 2008. Age at first marriage for women has also increased slightly over the last 10 years
- The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate improved among ages 15-19 and 30-34 from 10 to 20 per cent and from 36 to 49 per cent respectively between 1998 and 2008
- HIV/AIDS prevalence reduced among male and female youth aged 15-24 from 5.6 to 4.5 per cent and from 1.4 to 1.1 per cent respectively between 2007 and 2009
- Female Genital Cutting (FGM) declined by almost half since 1998 among age 15-19 and age 25-29

Despite these achievements, youth problems including drugs and substance abuse continue to persist. The level of youth involvement in decision making processes is not yet satisfactory. Inadequate capacity for service providers to offer youth friendly services is a major challenge.

### **Opportunities and Recommendations**

The new Constitution of Kenya 2010 categorized the youth as vulnerable requiring special attention. The constitution stipulates the rights the youth are to enjoy and the programmes the state shall provide. The new constitution offers an excellent opportunity for investing in young people and bringing out their full potential for current and the future.

The Kenya Vision 2030 also identifies several flagship projects for adolescents and youth. These include: establishment of youth empowerment centres; establishment of talent academies; increasing the youth enterprise fund; and, ensuring efficient and productive use of funds allocated to the youth groups through this fund.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In conclusion, the Government of Kenya reaffirms commitment to full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action to ensure that adolescents and youth have full access to quality education, productive employment, universal reproductive health care services and full protection of their rights.

**THANK YOU.**