

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. RICHARD NDUHUURA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MISSION OF UGANDA, ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE 49TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Madam Chair,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the African Group. The Group congratulates you Madam Chair and members of the bureau upon your election to lead the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. You can count on the group's support.

The African group associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E Mr. Virachai Plasai the Permanent Representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the special theme for CPD 49<sup>th</sup> Session “**Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda**” at such a critical stage as we embark on the implementation of the transformative 2030 Agenda - a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

There is no doubt that implementation of the 2030 agenda will require timely and reliable demographic data. In this regard, SDG targets 16.7 on legal identity and birth registration and 17.18 on disaggregated high quality data are crucial for monitoring progress made in the implementation of Agenda 2030 as well as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

**Madam Chair,**

In Africa, nearly 65% of the population comprises youth under 35 years. This youthful population can be harnessed to significantly contribute to Africa’s development. However, they are faced with adverse challenges of unemployment like most youth in the global economy. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that Africa’s youth bulge translates into a demographic dividend by: strengthening entrepreneurial capacity; supporting decent and well-paid jobs for young people; increasing access to adequate and sustainable financing for the youth and promoting youth empowerment and participation in development processes.

**Madam Chair,**

Africa attaches great importance to gender equality and women's empowerment as highlighted in Agenda 2063, the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. Gender equality is of critical importance in achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains a powerful tool for gender equality and empowerment of women, underpinned by sustainable development, peace and human rights, the pillars that the United Nations stands for.

In Agenda 2030, we reaffirmed that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls must be mainstreamed in all policies and programs not only in our respective countries but also across all of the United Nations System and that women have to fully participate in all decision-making processes.

Since Beijing, Africa has made great strides in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The African Leaders have expressed and shown a strong and visible leadership and

commitment to move forward the agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national and regional levels. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); as the strategic programme of the African Union gives great importance and attention to gender equality and empowerment of women. You will recall that in 2009, the African Union Assembly of the Heads of State and Government adopted the African Union Gender Policy, and the African Union officially launched the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) in October 2010, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The objective of the African Women's Decade is to accelerate the realization of regional and global commitments to the empowerment of women through a top down and bottom up approach which is inclusive of grassroots participation. To strengthen this initiative, the fund for African Women was also created. The purpose of the Fund is to finance project proposals from the agreed priority themes of the African Women's Decade.

We therefore, invite the United Nations family and the international community to work together with us to make AU Women's decade a success.

The African Group is of the view that we should ensure that investment in the empowerment of the youth, women and girls has a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained and inclusive economic growth, in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, small scale entrepreneurship, industry and services.

**Madam Chair,**

On health matters, although there is a decline in maternal and infant mortality rates due to malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS, we are deeply concerned that obstetric fistula remains among the major causes of maternal deaths in Africa. We call on the UN system and Development Partners to address all the causes of maternal deaths.

We reiterate the need to have zero tolerance to harmful practices towards women and girls. African states have launched a Campaign to end child marriage in Africa. We have taken measures individually and collectively to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation.

**Madam Chair,**

Demographic change presents some risks, but with good policies it will be one of the most consequential development opportunities of the SDG era. We call on all policy makers to base development policies on demographic evidence.

In conclusion, the African Group wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action. We are convinced that effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, without leaving anybody behind, will benefit from greatly strengthening the demographic base. This will, inter alia, require each country and every community to identify and locate persons in vulnerable situations, and make interventions that meet real needs of the people through a bottom up approach.

However, many developing countries including African Countries will face serious challenges in addressing development issues including inequalities because many lack core demographic data and national data systems are under-developed. In many cases, there are limited statistical capacities and inadequate use of reliable

data for national planning and monitoring progress in sustainable development.

In this regard, the African group calls on the UN system and development Partners to provide support in building capacities, transfer of technologies and to ensure adequate and sustainable financing for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Monitoring the implementation of SDG's will require strong and reliable national data systems.

African States wish to reaffirm the sovereign right of each Country to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action or other proposals in the CPD resolutions, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

**I thank you.**