

STATEMENT

BY

AKINREMI BOLAJI
Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP

AT THE

51ST SESSION OF COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

ON THE SPECIAL THEME:

SUSTAINABLE CITIES, HUMAN MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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Excellencies,

Mr Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, the African Group wishes to align its statement with the statement earlier delivered by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of G77 and China. Please, allow me to express our warm congratulations to you as the Chair of the 51st Session of the Commission on Population and Development and to the members of the Bureau. The African Group appreciates the report submitted by the Secretary General, which is crucial to the theme of this session.

The African Group is committed to the principles, goals and objectives set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), that serves as a comprehensive framework on population and development matters. We acknowledge the global commitment to sustainable, inclusive, safe, and resilient urban development as a critical step for realizing sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated manner at all levels, with the participation of all relevant actors.

We also support the full implementation of the Program of Action of the ICPD; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and the New Urban Agenda which we consider as pivotal instruments for the achievement of sustainable cities, efficient human mobility and international migration

Mr Chair,

The focus of deliberation at this session constitute some of the fundamental challenges to our regional development. The world is experiencing rapid urbanization where predictions show that in the next five years, the world population will increase by more than 400 million and 90 percent of the increase is expected to occur in urban areas and Africa is a crucial part of this significant shift. The continent will become more urban than rural in the next 15 years, and some 55 percent of Africans will reside in towns and cities. Africa's contribution to global urbanization is projected to increase from 11.3 percent in 2010 to 20.2 percent in 2050, with almost two-thirds of its population growth expected to occur in urban areas (UN HABITAT, 2014). These trends have wide-range implications for policy decisions and intervention in Africa. However, the capacity of our cities to respond to the increasing human mobility in terms of providing employment that guarantee sustainable livelihood, access to basic social amenities, health care services, security, education particularly for girls are limited leading to a largely negative policy position of governments, city authorities, and often host communities, on migration into urban areas.

In 2013, African governments agreed, at the Addis Ababa review conference on ICPD+20, that Place and Mobility should remain a central pillar of future population and development activities in our continent. This is underpinned by a recognition that population dynamics and growth, changing age structure, urbanization, migration and changing household and family structure, influence the opportunities for human development, and are essential to effective planning for inclusive economic growth and social development, as well as for sustainable development.

We acknowledge that our continent is witnessing rapid urbanization and dynamic human mobility, thus affecting the pace of our journey to building sustainable cities. Migration and Human Mobility including internal displacement, in Africa takes various forms due to different factors such as terrorism, civil wars, droughts, water shortages and natural disasters. Nevertheless, migration and human mobility in Africa are dominated by movement from rural neighbourhoods to modern cities due to rapid urbanization. It is estimated that by 2063, 62% of 2.5 Billion of Africa's projected population will be found in urban centers, while 38 per cent will be in rural areas. Undoubtedly, urban centers will act as important engines of growth for Africa's economic transformation in the coming decades.

We recognize that urban centers can contribute through enhanced productivity, industrialization, manufacturing and value-addition. Urban centers will also be a key to promoting regional integration, providing the nodes for the linkages associated with integration, and facilitating the movement of goods, services, capital and people. Thus Africa is determined to tap the transformative force of urbanization. However, sustainable cities in Africa will require skills development, employment and access to services and finance will be critical, as well as urban-rural linkages.

Mr Chair,

While our region has contributed little to global greenhouse gas emissions, Our plans, programmes and systems should address the needs of people who live in fragile ecosystems, by promoting the sustainable use of space, and by promoting urban growth within a systematic concern for environmental values, minimizing the size and impact of the urban blot, favouring energy-saving and well-integrated mass transportation, as well as density and compact cities.

We note the need to address the inter-linkages between urbanization, migration, human mobility, agriculture and rural development, and above all the need to address investment in people, especially youth and women. We recognize that there is a need to unleash the creative initiative and energy of the young population of Africa. This requires scaling up investment in early education and access to adequate health services for the youth. It requires that we scale up vocational training and increase investment in science, technology, research and innovation.

Africa is committed to improving shelter/housing delivery and slum eradication. This is a major priority in view of the rapidly expanding urban population and the backlog in delivery of

shelter and services. This will require improvements in legal, institutional, regulatory systems and capacities. It is also critical to ensure financing for urban development, in this regard, innovative financing approaches will be required to cope with the existing and anticipated needs to expand infrastructure, facilities, housing for sustainable cities with innovative strategies.

Mr Chair,

We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. We will continue to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of all migrants regardless of their migration status. Each individual should have the right to the highest standard of living. In order to achieve this, we are committed to the free movement of people and goods within countries to foster rural-urban inter-linkages, and regional integration.

Migration issues should be reflected in national development plans and strategies. Our migration policies should maximize the benefits and minimize the costs and repercussions of international migration. This implies that they should be evidence-based, particularly aimed at vulnerable groups, especially women and youth, and protect the rights of both migrants and citizens. We must reinforce and establish bilateral, regional and global partnerships on migration to progressively reduce barriers on movement while upholding the fundamental human rights of all migrants, and make migration an instrument of mutual development for the benefit of both migrants and countries. Policies that foster the integration and reintegration of migrants and returning migrants should be promoted

I thank you and I wish you a successful deliberation at this session.