

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT

DELIVERED BY

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AFRICAN GROUP CHAIR OF THE MONTH

AT THE
52ND SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

HOLDING AT THE
CONFERENCE ROOM 1, UN
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1st APRIL, 2019

MR. CHAIRMAN,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the Chair of the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development. We are confident that the 52nd session of the CPD would be successful under your leadership. Having constructively engaged throughout the preparatory process including during consultations and negotiations leading to the outcome document, the African Group wishes to reiterate its support to you and the Bureau at this commemorative session of the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

MR. CHAIRMAN,

2. 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.
3. We also support the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development; as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants; Global Compact on Migration which we consider pivotal instruments for the achievement of sustainable cities, efficient human mobility and international migration.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

4. The focus of deliberation at this session constitute some of the fundamental challenges to our regional development. The world is experiencing rapid demographic changes and Africa is a crucial part of this significant shift. There is no doubt that demographic change presents some challenges but we are convinced that with good policies, it could be one of the most consequential development opportunities of the SDGs era. While we are conscious of our demographic dividend as a continent and determined to ensure that none of our citizens is left behind in maximizing its benefits, we are aware that 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. In this regard, we are taking steps to ensure that policy makers in the continent base their national development strategies on our demographic realities.
5. We emphasize the linkages between the ICPD PoA, the 2030 agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063 as principles contained in each of these instruments aimed at ensuring dignity and equality for all. We note the need to respond to new challenges and opportunities relevant to population and development, such as the demographic dividend and migration trends, as well as the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It was in this connection that 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. We recognize that population dynamics and growth, changing age structure, urbanization, migration and changing household and family structures, influence the opportunities for human development, and are essential to effective planning for inclusive economic growth and social development, including sustainable development.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

6. We note the emphasis at this session on population-related data and we acknowledge that strengthening the demographic dividend base of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063, can't be done without taking steps to address key actions to fill the already identified data gap. We are committed to addressing the inter-linkages between urbanization, migration, human mobility, agriculture and rural development, and above all the need to invest in people, especially youth and women.
7. We recognize that there is urgent need to unleash the creative initiative and energy of Africa's large young population. This requires scaling up investment in early education and access to adequate health services for the youth and women. It requires that we scale up vocational training and increase investment in science, technology, research and innovation. In this connection, the African Group stresses the importance of increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other development finance enablers, in order to support Africa's endeavour to fully implement the ICPD PoA and its follow up commitments. In the same line, the African Group reiterates the crucial role of the United Nations Population Fund, in assisting Member States, within its mandate, based on developmental needs, national priorities and in consultation with member states.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

8. The African Group emphasize 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 reiterate the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development and we remain committed to cooperating 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.

9. To this effect, the African Group support the free movement of people and goods within countries as it foster rural-urban inter-linkages, and regional integration. We encourage the reflection of migration issues in national development plans and strategies. Our migration policies should be evidence-based, and aimed at assisting migrants in vulnerable situation, especially women and youth, and protecting the rights of both migrants and citizens. We encourage conscious adoption of policies that would make migration an instrument of mutual development for the benefit of both migrants and countries. We emphasize the need for developed countries to promote policies that foster the integration and reintegration of migrants and returning migrants.
10. In concluding, **Mr. Chairman**, the African Group believe that 25 years after the adoption of the Programme of Action for the ICPD, it is time to accelerate its implementation by supporting least developed countries with necessary enabling resources that is consistent with national laws and development priorities as well as in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.
11. Being aware of the critical need at this point in time, to adopt a consensual declaration, be assured of the Groups support for your approach and constructive engagement throughout the 52nd session of the CPD.

I thank you.