



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

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At the

52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development

General debate on

**“Review and Appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International  
Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-  
up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**

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**Mr. Chairman,**

On behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, I express our warmest congratulations to you and other members of the Bureau on your election at this 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. Please be assured of our support throughout this session.

I thank the Secretary-General for the informative reports submitted to guide our deliberations for this session.

Let me at the outset, align Sierra Leone with the statements delivered by the State of Palestine on behalf of the G-77 and China, and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group respectively.

Twenty-five years ago, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo by 179 Member States, which provides the framework on population and development to guide people-centred development and progress in countries. Sierra Leone, therefore, reiterates its continued commitment and support to the ideals, goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the key actions for its further implementation. Sierra Leone therefore calls for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We recognize that the world's population is increasingly undergoing important transformations in both distribution and age structure, characterized by rising urbanization and increasingly youthful populations. This situation is not particular to my Country alone, where at least 75% of the population is under 35 years old. Such dynamics have clearly manifested social and economic consequences with implications for sustainable development. This includes rapid urbanization with the rural exodus of youth to cities in search of better economic opportunities.

Being mindful that this boom in our youthful population poses serious challenges for jobs and delivery of social services in our country, and to sustainable development, we therefore, applaud the appropriateness of this year's theme, ***“Review and Appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Contribution to the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”***.

We are aware that with appropriate investments in health, including sexual and reproductive health, modern family planning, the empowerment of women and

girls, education with appropriate skills development, conducive economic policies, decent job creation for youth and good governance, we can expect to harness the demographic dividend. This will create the necessary conditions for moving our nation along the path to sustainable development.

**Mr. Chairman,**

With an annual population growth of 3.2% and fertility rate of 5.6 children per women, there is a little fiscal space to invest in basic social services. We have recently launched a National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage and efforts are underway to introduce Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools as part of our free quality Education. Also, worthy of note is the recent declaration by H.E. President Julius Maada Bio, that rape and other forms of gender-based violence are a national emergency.

**Mr. Chairman**

Over the years, Sierra Leone has made significant efforts to develop and enact a range of laws, policies and strategies at the national level to tackle gender inequality and discrimination, as well as to ensure women's empowerment, while ensuring that the physically challenged and aged are not marginalized. We are committed to promoting the overall empowerment of women in political, social, economic and cultural spheres.

Sierra Leone is devoted to making sure that everyone has the right to enjoy reproductive health, which is the foundation for having healthy children. We have identified reproductive and maternal health as a priority in our national development plan- "*Education for Development*". In this regard, we are working in partnership with the development partners to strengthen the capacity of the health care delivery system of Sierra Leone and increase access to vital services and information.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Sierra Leone recently revised its Population Policy taking into account the challenges we face, and the opportunities that exist with our "New Direction" agenda.

To conclude, the Government of Sierra Leone recently launched its Medium-Term National Development Plan, 'Education for Development', which defines our vision for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Human Capital Development is at the core of our new national development plan. It is the

fundamental pathway to deliver development results that will better the lives of all Sierra Leoneans.

Sierra Leone has strong political will for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the determination to “leave no one behind” in our development strides. We underscore the significance of partnerships and continued international cooperation in the implementation of the ICDP Programme of Action. We reaffirm our dedication to the enduring principles, and the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

I thank you for your attention.