



## 94-09-08: Statement of South Africa, H.E. Mr. Abe Williams

ISO: ZAF

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AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT BY MR. BE WILLIAM, MINISTER OF WELFARE AND  
POPULATION DEVELOPMENT, LEADER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
DELEGATION, IN THE PLENARY OF THE  
INTERNAL CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENT, CAIRO, 8 SEPTEMBER 1994.

MR PRESIDENT, IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO CONVEY TO  
YOU AND THE BUREAU THE CONGRATULATIONS OF THE SOUTH  
AFRICAN DELEGATION ON YOUR ELECTION.

MY DELEGATION WISHES TO EXPRESS OUR PROFOUND THANKS TO  
EGYPT FOR THE HOSPITALITY WE HAVE EXPERIENCED AND FOR THE  
ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS  
OF THIS CONFERENCE.

WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE

CONFERENCE AND HER STAFF FOR THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PREPARATORY WORK DONE TO ENSURE THAT OUR DELIBERATIONS CAN TAKE PLACE ON A SOUND FOUNDATION.

IT IS AN HONOUR FOR ME TO LEAD, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A MINISTERIAL DELEGATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO AN

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DEALING WITH SUCH AN IMPORTANT WORLD ISSUE AS THAT OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

PRESIDENT MANDELA HAS REQUESTED ME TO CONVEY HIS GREETINGS TO YOU AND TO EXPRESS HIS SINCERE REGRET THAT HE IS NOT ABLE TO BE PRESENT AT THIS IMPORTANT EVENT. HE HAS INDICATED HIS STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE WORK OF THIS CONFERENCE BY SIGNING THE STATEMENT ON POPULATION STABILIZATION OF THE GLOBAL COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

FOR SOUTH AFRICA, THIS CONFERENCE IS AN EVENT ON A PAR WITH OUR RECENT ACCEPTANCE AS A MEMBER OF THE OAU, THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND THE GROUP OF 77 AND THE RESUMPTION OF OUR SEAT IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON 23 JUNE 1994 - MILESTONES WHICH HAVE SIGNALLED SOUTH AFRICA'S FULL READ MISSION TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY}.

SOUTH AFRICA IS ALREADY PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE DI THE AFFAIRS OF AFRICA AS A MEMBER OF THE OAU AND ONLY LAST WEEK SOUTH AFRICA WAS ADMITTED TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY.

ON EACH OF THESE OCCASIONS, SOUTH AFRICA HAS Committed ITSELF TO BE AN ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY AND OF OUR REGION. WE WISH TO MAKE THE SAME COMMITMENT HERE TODAY.

AS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN GROUP, MY GOVERNMENT HAS STUDIED THE RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THE THIRD AFRICAN POPULATION CONFERENCE HELD IN DAKAR, SENEGAL, IN DECEMBER 1992. I WISH TO PLACE ON RECORD TODAY THAT SOUTH AFRICA ENDORSES THE DAKAR/NGOR DECLARATION ON POPULATION, FAMILY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MR PRESIDENT, IN APRIL 1994 SOUTH AFRICA EMBARKED ON A PROCESS OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION WHICH HAS IN SOME QUARTERS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS MIRACULOUS.

IN ONE OF ITS FIRST MAJOR ACTS OF POLICY-MAKING, THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY ADOPTED A RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR ALL ITS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES. ALL GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE POPULATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES, ARE UNDER REVIEW.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IS WELL AWARE THAT IT HAS SPECIFIC POPULATION CHALLENGES TO FACE IN ITS QUEST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS.

EXISTING NATIONAL DATA ON FERTILITY, MORTALITY, MIGRATION, URBANIZATION AND OVERALL POPULATION SIZE, STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE TRUE SITUATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION. THERE ARE UNDERCOATS

ON, FOR EXAMPLE, THE URBANIZATION RATE, BIRTH RATES AND OTHER VITAL STATISTICS. NATIONAL STATISTICS ARE UNRELIABLE AND INCOMPLETE BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION OF SOUTH AFRICA UNDER PREVIOUS POLICIES. NEVERTHELESS, ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA IS CURRENTLY NOT LESS THAN 40 MILLION, AND THAT THE POPULATION IS GROWING AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF MORE THAN 2%.

THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA HAS A LARGE YOUTHFUL SEGMENT AND A SMALL BUT GROWING ELDERLY POPULATION. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 40% OF THE POPULATION IS YOUNGER THAN 15 YEARS AND 4% IS 65 YEARS AND OLDER THE MEDIANAGE OF THE POPULATION IS ESTIMATED AS BETWEEN 19 AND 20 YEARS. THE YOUTHFUL NATURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION WILL REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYMENT.

PREVIOUS POLICIES AND SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS HAVE HAD AN IMPACT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE. FERTILITY, MIGRATION AND MORTALITY PATTERNS AND ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD WERE AFFECTED BY THESE POLICIES.

RECENT ESTIMATES OF VITAL DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS REFLECT THE FOLLOWING DISPARITIES IN DEVELOPMENT:

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES CONSISTENTLY INDICATE DISPARITIES IN TERMS OF RACE, GENDER AND AGE.

LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS ARE LOW, WITH THE LOWEST LEVELS AMONG WOMEN.

HEALTH SERVICES ARE UNEQUALLY-DISTRIBUTED,  
ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN VITAL DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS  
SHOW THAT WOMEN FALL FAR BEHIND IN EDUCATION,

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

THESE DISPARITIES HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON FERTILITY,  
MORTALITY AND MIGRATION. THEY ALSO POINT TO SPECIFIC  
PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE FUTURE.

THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IS AN  
INTEGRATED, COHERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY FRAME WORK  
IT SEEKS TO MOBILIZE PEOPLE AND RESOURCES TOWARD THE  
BUILDING OF A DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIAL AND NON-SEXIST FUTURE  
FOR OUR COUNTRY. IT RESTS ON SIX BASIC PRINCIPLES, NAMELY:

- AN INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMME WITHIN OUR  
MEANS;

A PEOPLE- AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESS;

PEACE AND SECURITY FOR ALL;

NATION-BUILDING;

LINKING RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT; AND

DEMOCRATIZING THE COUNTRY.

THESE PRINCIPLES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THE  
FOLLOWING KEY PROGRAMMES:

FIRSTLY, MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE  
THROUGH JOB CREATION, LAND REFORM, THE PROVISION  
OF HOUSING, WATER AND SANITATION, ENERGY AND  
ELECTRIFICATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, A  
CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, NUTRITION, HEALTH  
CARE AND SOCIAL WELFARE.

SECONDLY, DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES, WHICH  
INCLUDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT,  
AN ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMME AND ENSURING ACCESS  
TO SPORT AND RECREATION.

A THIRD KEY PROGRAMME OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IS BUILDING THE ECONOMY OF  
SOUTH AFRICA.

AND LASTLY, DEMOCRATIZING THE STATE AND SOCIETY.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF POPULATION POLICY AS AN  
INTEGRAL PART OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME WHICH I HAVE OUTLINED, IT IS IMPORTANT TO STATE  
THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN ACKNOWLEDGES THE  
LINK BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS. THE INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE-  
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING, CREATING AN  
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT THAT FOSTERS THE CREATION OF JOBS,

AND THE PROVISION FOR BASIC NEEDS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE AND WELFARE SERVICES, ARE IMPORTANT.

SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT AT PRESENT HAVE A POPULATION POLICY ACCEPTED BY ALL PARTIES. A POPULATION POLICY IS THEREFORE CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

AS PART OF A COHERENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WILL EMBARK ON A COMPREHENSIVE POPULATION CENSUS AND REGULAR SURVEYS TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENT.

THE IMPORTANT LINKAGES OF GENDER EQUITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN WITH POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY HIGHLIGHTED IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESSES FOR THIS CONFERENCE. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE IS FULLY ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA INTRODUCES PROTECTION FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS. THE BILL OF RIGHTS HAS SPECIFIC RELEVANCE TO THE SITUATION OF WOMEN, AS IT FULLY ENTRENCHES GENDER

EQUALITY, WHICH HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR GENDER EQUITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. THIS NEW LEGAL POSITION OF WOMEN IS AN ESSENTIAL BASIS FOR REDRESSING THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN A PRACTICAL WAY.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IS GIVING FURTHER IMPETUS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN. IT HAS, AS KEY OBJECTIVES, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND ELEVATING THEIR ROLE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND THE ECONOMY, IMPROVING THE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO EDUCATION, JOBS, LAND, HOUSING AND HEALTH SERVICES AS WELL AS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT. THESE WILL HAVE IMPORTANT SPINOFFS FOR INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING POWER OF WOMEN, INCLUDING CONTROL OVER FERTILITY, MORBIDITY, MORTALITY AND MIGRATION.

AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THE POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT EQUATION WHICH THIS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS, IS THAT OF HEALTH, MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IS COMMITTED TO THE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH OF ALL, SOUTH AFRICANS. THIS WILL BE DONE THROUGH A PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

APPROACH, INTEGRATING PREVENTIVE, PROMOTIVE, CURATIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES. HERE THE CHALLENGE IS TO BUILD ON THE EXISTING FAMILY PLANNING SERVICE, BY IMPROVING THE RANGE OF CONTRACEPTIVE CHOICES AND BY INCORPORATING THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES, INCLUDING HIV/AIDS, CERVICAL CANCER AND INFERTILITY.

THERE WILL BE A PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY ANTENATAL SERVICES, DELIVERY SERVICES AND POSTNATAL



SERVICES FOR ALL WOMEN. SPECIAL SERVICES AIMED AT ADOLESCENTS, IN PARTICULAR EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS TO COMBAT ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG THE YOUTH, ARE TO BE DEVELOPED. THE NEED TO RE-ORIENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES TO INCLUDE EDUCATION, COUNSELING AND CONFIDENTIALITY AND TO PROMOTE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND DIGNITY IS BEING GIVEN SPECIAL EMPHASIS.

THE RECENT DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA PROVIDES[DES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TACKLING DEVELOPMENT ISSUES WITH A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IS TO ASSESS AND ADDRESS THE COUNTRY'S DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

MR PRESIDENT, MY DELEGATION IS PARTICIPATING ACTIVELY IN THE WORK OF THIS CONFERENCE. SOUTH AFRICA WISHES TO CONTRIBUTE MEANINGFULLY TO SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH WE MUST ALL ATTEMPT TO IN AFRICA AND WORLDWIDE AS WE APPROACH THE 21ST CENTURY.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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