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AS WRITTEN

RWANDA

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MAZIMHAKA PATECK

MINISTER OF YOUTH, SPORTS

AND COOPERATIVES OF RWANDA

AT THE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

5 -13 SEPTEMBER 1994 .

- MR. PRESIDENT, Mme SECRETARY GENERAL
- DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN .

1. MY DELEGATION WHICH REPRESENTS THE BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT SET UP ON
19th JULY 1994, AND THE PEOPLE OF RWANDA, FEELS PRIVILEGED TO BE AT THIS

CONFERENCE, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO BE HELD SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER RESPONSIBILITY IN KIGALI .

2. THE RWANDESE DELEGATION WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS SATISFACTION AND INDEED COMMENDS THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS CONFERENCE FOR A JOB BOTH TECHNICALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY WELL DONE, WISHES TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT FOR HAVING HOSTED THE CONFERENCE AND WISHES TO EXPRESS THE RWANDESE PEOPLES GRATITUDE TO THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) FOR ITS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH HAS ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT TO SEND A DELEGATION TO THIS CONFERENCE .

3. MY DELEGATION WISHES TO REAFFIRM OUR COUNTRY'S FULL COGNIZANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES AND FUNDAMENTAL POSITIONS OF INTENTS AND PURPOSES WHICH HAVE GUIDED THE PREPARATION LEADING TO THIS CONFERENCE . WE SHALL ENDEAVOR TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DELIBERATIONS ON POPULATION, SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH , SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE INTER RELATEDNESS OF THESE ISSUES.

4. MY DELEGATION ALSO RECOGNIZES THE MAJOR EXPRESSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RESOLVE PREVIOUSLY MADE ON MATTERS RELATING TO POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

5. THE PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES WHICH UNDERLIE MY COUNTRY'S PREOCCUPATION WITH POPULATION MATTERS ARE SPELT OUT IN ANOTHER DOCUMENT INTITLED "NATIONAL REPORT ON POPULATION" WHICH IS BEING DISTRIBUTED BY THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT. THESE NEED NOT TO BE REPEATED HERE.

6. WHEREAS MY DELEGATION WISHES TO REGISTER ITS SUPPORT FOR, AND

COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM OBJECTIVES OF POPULATION DEVELOPMENT AS ALREADY REFERRED TO ABOVE, I WISH ALSO TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THIS CONFERENCE AND INDEED TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL OUR PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RWANDA, A NUMBER OF FACTORS THAT CONSTRAIN OUR PRESENT CAPACITY TO DEVELOP, LET ALONE IMPLEMENT, A MEANINGFUL NATIONAL POPULATION ACTION PLAN.

7. FIRST, A PLANNED MASS GENOCIDE WAS CARRIED OUT IN RWANDA BY THE FORMER PRESIDENTS POLITICAL PARTY, ITS MILITIA AND THE ARMED FORCES. OVER 1 MILLION PEOPLE WERE KILLED BETWEEN APRIL AND JULY, THAT IS CLOSE TO 20% OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION OF RWANDA. THE GENOCIDE, WHICH WAS PRIMARILY INTENDED TO EXTERMINATE TUTSIS, DID NOT SPARE CHILDREN, YOUTHS, WOMEN AND MEN OF ALL AGES . IT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY WHOLESALE MASSACRE OF OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS AND MOST OF THE PROFESSIONALS. DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURE IS NOT NEW TO RWANDA AND SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING COLONIAL AUTHORITIES HAVE RESPONDED TO THIS CHALLENGE BASICALLY BY OFF-LOADING THE EXCESS POPULATION ON NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THUS, IT WAS BELGIAN POLICY TO ENTICE OR COERCE BANYARWANDA TO EMIGRATE TO CONGO, UGANDA, TANZANIA AS MINE AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

POST-INDEPENDENCE GOVERNMENTS CONTINUED THE SAME POLICY BUT ADDED THE DIMENSION OF FORCED EXILE. AS WE ARE ALL AWARE, THESE POLICIES HAVE NOT SERVED TO STABILIZE THE POPULATION IN RWANDA. THEY HAVE ON THE CONTRARY LED TO SERIOUS DE STABILIZATION OF RWANDA AND NOW THREATEN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA CAN BE SEEN BOTH AS A POLITICAL RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES TO ESTABLISHED ORDER AND AS YET ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE DEMOGRAPHICS TO SERVE POLITICAL ENDS . ORDINARY PEOPLE WERE PERSUADED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MASSACRE ALONG CLEARLY DEFINABLE LINES.

1) INTENSIVE ANTI-TUTSI PROPAGANDA CONVINCED SOME,

2) INTIMIDATION AND KILLINGS OF THOSE WHO REFUSED TO TAKE PART
PERSUADED OTHERS, AND

3) A SMALL NUMBER WAS CONVINCED THAT THEY COULD INHERIT THE PROPERTY OF
THOSE THEY HAVE KILLED. THIS HAD HAPPENED AT EVERY ROUND OF MASSACRES IN
1959, 1961 , 1964 ,1966, 1973.

WE THUS RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO EMBARK ON DEVELOPMENT POLICIES THAT WILL
PROMOTE POPULATION STABILIZATION. OUR NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION WILL FOCUS
ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE POPULATION THROUGH BASIC EDUCATION,
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES, EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF
NATIONAL LIFE ,AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND FACILITIES RELATED TO
PLANNED PARENTHOOD. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE RECENT GENOCIDE, THE
POPULATION STRUCTURE OF RWANDA HAS CHANGED SO MUCH THAT THE COUNTRY NOW
FINDS ITSELF WITHOUT VALID ,RELIABLE ,TIMELY AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT
POPULATION DATA WHICH IS NEEDED TO FORM THE BASIS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM
DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION ,MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO ADDRESS THIS CONSTRAINT BEFORE ANY ATTEMPT
TO DEFINE A POPULATION ACTION PLAN FOR RWANDA COULD BE MEANINGFUL . WE
NEED FINANCIAL AND EXPERT ASSISTANCE TO FILL THIS GAP.

SECOND, THE POLITICAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN
RWANDA HAS CHANGED SO MUCH IN THE LAST THREE YEARS AND NULL CONTINUE TO
DO SO AS THE NEW GOVERNMENT EMBARKS ON ITS ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION
PROGRAM, THAT PREVIOUSLY DESIGNED POPULATION SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND
PROJECTS MAY NO LONGER BE, BY AND LARGE, IN CONCORDANCE WITH THE PRESENT
AND NEAR TERM REALITIES AS WELL AS DEMANDS ON DEVELOPMENT IN THE
COUNTRY. CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH PROGRAMS PREVIOUSLY DESIGNED
COULD NOT LEAD TO OPTIMAL RETURNS FROM THE FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES
THAT THEIR BUDGETS PROVIDE FOR.

THIRD, WE SEE POPULATION BOTH AS A RESOURCE, IN THE SENSE OF A HUMAN RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ON ONE HAND ,AND AS A CONSUMER SECTOR OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND USER OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ON THE OTHER, THE LATTER THE NATION HAS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE POPULATION.

ONE OF THE PRESSING ISSUES THE COUNTRY HAS TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR IS THE REPATRIATION AND INTEGRATION OF UP TO 2 MILLION REFUGEES WHO ARE NOW IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES SOME HAVE BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS.

OUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD TRY, BY ALL MEANS, TO ATTRACT QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO THE COUNTRY TO PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SEMI AND SKILLED TECHNICAL, PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS SO MUCH NEEDED AFTER THE RECENT MASS GENOCIDE AND POPULATION EXODUS.

WE APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ,UN AGENCIES AND NGO'S WITH EXISTING CAPACITY IN THE FIELD OF REPATRIATION OF NATIONAL TALENTS TO HELP RWANDA AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

8. REGARDING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION ON THE COUNTRY'S LAND RESOURCES AND RELATED SERVICES WE BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED HAND IN HAND WITH THE ISSUE OF POPULATION STABILIZATION.

9. THE ISSUES RAISED ABOVE CALL FOR, IN OUR VIEW, THE FOLLOWING URGENT MEASURES;

(i) REHABILITATION OF THE RWANDESE SOCIETY. THE LOSS OF ONE OUT OF EVERY SEVEN PEOPLE IN RWANDA HAS LEFT A DEVASTATED POPULATION. ORPHANS ,WIDOWS, WIDOWERS WHO ESCAPED DEATH BUT WITNESSED THE CARNAGE ARE WALKING AROUND IN A TRANCE. FAMILIES AND FRIENDS HAVE BEEN TORN ASUNDER

IN THE ORGY OF ETHNIC HATRED. SPECIAL CARE FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS IS NEEDED AND AT PRESENT, THE COUNTRY HAS NO CAPACITY TO HANDLE THOSE CASES IN SUCH LARGE NUMBERS. IT IS AN EPIDEMIC WORSE THAN CHOLERA. THROUGH NATIONAL RECONCILIATION POLICIES THAT WILL HINGE ON JUSTICE FOR ALL TO REBUILD OUR SOCIETY ON THE FOUNDATION OF BASIC RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW.

(ii) A COMPREHENSIVE POPULATION SECTOR REVIEW, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE SAMPLE SURVEYS AND IN WHICH WE ENCOURAGE DONORS TO THE RWANDAN POPULATION AND HEALTH SECTORS TO PARTICIPATE

(iii) A REVIEW OF EXISTING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN THE RWANDAN POPULATION AND HEALTH SECTORS, WITH A VIEW TO REPROGRAMMING THE UTILIZATION OF THE FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES BUDGETED THEREIN;

(iv) A REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE INSTITUTIONS PREVIOUSLY SET UP IN RWANDA, SOME WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS REFERRED TO ABOVE, WITH A VIEW TO MAKING THEM MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION SECTOR;

(v) A CONCERTED EFFORT AND SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WITH FINANCIAL AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF NATIONALS. POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RWANDA HINGES ON ITS ABILITY TO GUARANTEE THE RIGHT TO CITIZENSHIP AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO ALL.

(vi) AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY, BASED ON PROPOSED POPULATION SECTOR REVIEW AND EXISTING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS ON THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A FUTURE POPULATION ACTION PLAN.

10. LASTLY, MR. PRESIDENT, WE WISH TO THANK ALL THE AGENCIES ,BILATERAL, MULTILATERAL, NON-GOVERNMENTAL (NGO'S) AND OTHERS WHICH CONTINUE TO OFFER FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT RWANDESE POPULATION AND HEALTH PROGRAMS.

MEMBERS OF MY DELEGATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHOSE ORGANIZATIONS, ARE OR PLAN TO BE, INVOLVED IN MY COUNTRY'S POPULATION SECTOR. I LOOK FORWARD TO START THE DISCUSSIONS HERE IN CAIRO AND TO CONTINUING THEM WITH YOU TOGETHER WITH MY OTHER COLLEAGUES IN GOVERNMENT WHEN YOU NEXT VISIT RWANDA, WHICH I HOPE WILL BE SOON.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

For further information, please contact: popin@undp.org
POPIN Gopher site: <gopher://gopher.undp.org/11/ungophers/popin>
POPIN WWW site: <http://www.undp.org/popin>