

Statement to The Hague Forum, 8-12 February 1999

As written:

REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

STATEMENT BY

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**AT THE HAGUE INTERNATIONAL FORUM
ON ICPD+5**

**8TH – 12TH FEBRUARY 1999
THE HAGUE – THE NETHERLANDS**

Mr/Mme President
Your Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Republic of Mozambique, I would like to express my gratitude to UNFPA for organising and the Government of The Netherlands for hosting this forum. Five years after ICPD, this forum constitutes an opportunity for a collective follow-up of what has been achieved within population issues.

In Cairo, Mozambique participated at the highest level, and was one of the signatories of the ICPD Programme of Action. Coincidentally, the new government, established in October 1994 following the first multi-party elections, approved its **5-year** programme, which identified the country development priorities. To facilitate the implementation of this programme, the government ought to review and formulate a set of coherent policies for different sectors, such as Health, Education, and environment.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Mozambique is a country with a high rate of population growth, estimated at around 2.6% per year, as a result of a rapid declining mortality rate and a persistent high fertility rate estimated at around 5.8 children per woman, with significant variations within the country. Meanwhile, infant mortality rate is still very high with an estimate of 134 per thousand live births, and maternal mortality is very alarming estimated at around 1,500 per 100,000 live births.

The interplay of fertility and mortality implies that the population structure is dominated by a high percentage of young people. In 1997, the population group below 18 years old represented almost 54% of the total population; this constitutes a major challenge for government institutions in terms of provision of basic social services.

Meanwhile, the population distribution is significantly uneven, with a big concentration in urban and coastal areas. This fact was further exacerbated by the past internal war, which caused major internal migration, and significantly altering the normal population distribution.

To address these factors and to insure adequate integration of population variables within its plans and programmes, the Government of Mozambique decided to formulate its National Population Policy. This policy was perceived as a fundamental instrument to facilitate the national efforts in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and to contribute to a more harmonious economic growth and a better human development of the Mozambican population.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Recognising that the definition of a population policy is a national endeavour, where all sectors should be involved, the government adopted a participatory methodology involving all sectors, with extensive consultations, which included decision-makers, technicians, academicians, religious groups and unions, and civil society in general. The International Organisations were also invited to take part of the process. Moreover, several seminars and workshops were organised at central as well as regional levels, to discuss and encourage contributions. Also, some study tours were conducted to other African countries to benefit

from their experience. This methodology created a very conducive environment for a wider participation in the policy formulation.

In parallel, a technical drafting group was also created, headed by the Vice-Minister of Education, to compile a draft Population Policy. In 1998, the process was culminated with a National Conference for a final review and adoption of the proposed policy. Later, the document was reviewed by the Technical Population Cabinet and the Consultative Council of Ministry of Planning and Finance. Presently, the document is being submitted to the Ministerial Council for final approval.

The formulation of the Population Policy represented a new approach for the development of national policies and strategies. It showed that through dialogue it is possible to reach consensus on controversial topics provided that all diverse actors are involved not only in implementing policies but also in their definition.

In implementing the ICPD recommendations, one of the major challenges facing Mozambique was the introduction of the Reproductive Health perspective. Within this respect, services and training curricula were adapted and health personnel were later trained on the new approach. In terms of Family Planning, efforts are being developed to ensure involvement of men through disseminating information targeting positive behavioural changes, and higher demand for Reproductive health services. Moreover, Reproductive Health services and **counselling** targeting adolescents and youth are among the main present priorities. In that effect, in 1996, an Inter-sectoral Committee for Adolescent and Youth Support was created, which should co-ordinate activities related to adolescent Reproductive Health issues at national level.

On the other side, and facing the prevailing imbalances on gender equity and equality to access to resources, government is currently making more efforts to define and implement policies and strategies to improve women social status. Within this context, in 1996, the government approved a National Post-Beijing Plan of Action, and also established for its implementation a Multi-sectoral Operative Group, including governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Simultaneously, many institutions had established Gender units within their structure to ensure a better definition and implementation of specific strategies for the advancement of Mozambican women, and for initiating positive changes in the social relations of both sexes. This included efforts to review the budgetary methodology adopting a sex dis-aggregated format, which provided an opportunity for a more gender analysis of the Government budget.

The current efforts are already bringing its results and benefits. Mozambique could be proud of having a Population Policy, which was widely and deeply debated, and whose implementation is already bringing some plausible results. In the education sector, school enrolment is increasing by an average of 10% annually since 1995, hence increasing access of Mozambican children, especially girls and young women. In addition, since 1994, the Government is constantly and gradually increasing the percentage of the financial resources allocated to social sectors. The percentage of expenditures on Health and Education sectors increased from 14% in 1994 to 28% in 1999.

The implementation of many of these programmes and efforts could, to a large extent, be accorded to the partnership developed among the different governmental institutions, civil

society, the international community and donors. In this respect, UNFPA had a very important role, as a main donor for Population related programmes. The formulation of the current UNFPA Country Programme for Mozambique was a very participatory process, involving many new partners in designing and implementing their respective programmes.

Finally, we are sure and confident that we had launched and established in Mozambique the essential basis for implementing the ICPD programme of Action, with a vision to promote a sustainable development **centred** on human being. The current efforts would also contribute to the current Government efforts to launch a national reflection exercise to formulate The Vision 2020 for an integrated and long-term development of Mozambique.

Thank you.