



UGANDA

Permanent Mission of Uganda
to the United Nations
New York

Tel: (212) 949-0110
Fax: (212) 687-4517

STATEMENT

BY

**HON. GERALD SSENDAULA
MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
LEADER OF UGANDA DELEGATION TO**

**THE TWENTY-FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE OVERALL REVIEW AND
APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME
OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. President

Uganda actively participated in the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and we are fully **committed** to the implementation of Programme of Action and Recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (**ICPD**). We are continuing to mainstream the adolescents and youth, to empower women, to emancipate the elderly and persons with disability in our development planning and to address Reproductive Health issues in its wider context.

We attach a lot of importance to the involvement of civil society, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations (**NGOs**) and other stakeholders, in population and development activities, including in the planning, designing, implementing and monitoring of such activities. We are also striving to ensure that population programmes put the human being at the centre of development activities and provide an enabling environment so that individuals, men and women, **can** play their **rightful** role in society. It is only through these activities that we can attain sustainable development.

Post - ICPD Activities

As part of a series of post-ICPD activities, in March 1995, Uganda adopted an explicit National Population Policy for Sustainable Development. In this Policy, priority concerns are clearly identified and the Policy has **since-then** guided our efforts and those of our development partners, including the civil society and **NGOs**, in programming in this area of population and development.

HIV/AIDS

Uganda has intensified its fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic through a multisectoral

approach and the use of an open policy to deal with the epidemic. The President of the Republic of Uganda went public over the issue of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and alerted the whole nation about the need to tackle the epidemic squarely. I am glad to report that our efforts have not been in vain. For the last 2 years, we have **started** witnessing a definite decline in HIV/AIDS epidemic. This should not make us complacent. The lesson we have learnt is that although HIV/AIDS has no cure, well conceived, good and deliberate policies can be effective. Our open policy also helped to galvanize our development partners in coming to our assistance. In order to make a decisive difference the effort have to be intensified and applied persistently. The fact of the matter is that HIV/AIDS epidemic has far **reaching** implications for our population and the international community should help us to tackle it squarely.

ADOLESCENTS/YOUTH

Like other developing countries, Uganda has a largely young population. Since the ICPD, we have paid more attention to adolescents and youth. We have embarked on programmes to address the hitherto neglected needs of the young people. These include programmes to enhance adolescent reproductive life; to address basic education and development of children, especially the girl child; and in the use of data to improve programming for the youth. We are starting to see the benefits of these programmes.

GENDER ISSUES

The Uganda government has also identified women as a group that had been marginalized and which **needed to be mainstreamed** in our development process. Issues of equality, equity and empowerment **of women** are very important to us. In order to empower women, Uganda took advantage of the recommendations of both the ICPD and the Beijing Women's Conference. We have put in place a process of politically emancipating women through creating special elective seats exclusively for women, **from** village to national level. As a

result we have a **sizeable** number of elected Women Members of Parliament. Currently, we have a woman Vice President. The Civil Service, is also headed by a woman. Women have at the same time been promoted in the Judiciary, Police, Prisons and other sectors of civil **service**. We will continue to support affirmative action for women and to ensure education for the Girl-Child as part of our Universal Primary Education (**UPE**) programme. These programmes will significantly enhance the self-esteem and the productivity of our women.

HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

With regard to harmful traditional practices that impinge on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights of Women, we have tackled the problem of Female Genital Mutilation (**FGM**) through a culturally sensitive approach. As a result, within a period of 2 years, we have witnessed a remarkable decline in this harmful practice in the District of Kapchorwa where it was most prevalent. In recognition of this major achievement, the people of Kapchorwa were awarded the prestigious 1998 United Nations Population Award. We will continue with efforts to completely eliminate this harmful practice. On December **3, 1998**, the President of the Republic of Uganda made a major pronouncement urging that the people of Kapchorwa abandon this culture.

ADVOCACY

In the field of advocacy and in order to enhance reproductive health and advocacy activities, Uganda has enlisted the collaboration and support of Members of Parliament through the Parliamentary Forum on Population and **Development** and Food Security. Members of Parliament are now outspoken advocates of Reproductive Health and other population related issues. We have also been able to reach out to both religious and cultural leaders. In Uganda, religious leaders of the Catholic, Protestant and Islam faiths, just like the Rings of the various Kingdoms in the country, have also lent a strong hand to our programmes. This has widened participation and involvement of communities in programmes that target them

and ensured ownership, commitment and the sustainability of these programmes.

NATIONAL INDICES

Let me state that although Uganda has registered modest achievements in the field of population, Uganda's social indices remain poor by any standards. Maternal mortality rate remains unacceptably high at 506 per 100,000 while infant mortality rate was high at 97 per 1,000 in 1995. Contraceptive prevalence rate stood at only 15 per cent in 1995 while total fertility rate remained high at 6.8 children in 1995. Poverty stood at 46% in 1996 and life expectancy is low at a mere 48 years. Clearly, therefore, we need to do a lot more to reverse these negative trends.

The Government of Uganda regards the population programme as a high priority and we have done our best to allocate considerable resources to the sector. But due to the external debt and other budgetary demands, we still need the assistance of the international community. As we strive to fulfill our commitments, we urge the **developed** countries to fully meet **their** commitments to provide the financial resources necessary to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

I thank you, Mr. President