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*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
To the United Nations*

**STATEMENT ON ZIMBABWE'S PROGRESS IN
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICPD 1994
PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

PRESENTED BY

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**THE PLANNING COMMISSIONER, REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
AT THE 21ST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. President, Zimbabwe welcomes this auspicious occasion of the Special Session of the General Assembly. It provides us with yet another forum to review progress made in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. Prior to the 1994 Cairo Conference, Zimbabwe was already implementing various programmes that were meant to improve on the socio-economic status of its people. The war of liberation in Zimbabwe had seen men and women share the burden of the struggle equally. This made our decisions for national emancipation gender sensitive. Some of these decisions included the promulgation of the following statutes:

- The legal Age of Majority Act of 1982 provides for the reduction of the legal Age of Majority from 21 to 18 years, and that empowered the Zimbabwean youth to determine and shape their future.
- The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985 resulted in the further emancipation of Zimbabwean women as the provision for inheritance were revised to allow for 50% entitlement of a deceased husband's estate-by the surviving spouse. It was not possible before for this to happen.
- The Labour Relations Act of 1992 provided the following for women:

- a. retain their jobs after falling pregnant. Before then, a working woman who fell pregnant was required to resign her job.
- b. paid maternity leave
- c. lactating mothers are given time off their jobs for breast feeding.
- d. ensures equal pay for equal work regardless of colour, race or sex.

In 1982, Zimbabwe conducted its first ever comprehensive national population census that was followed by a similar one in 1992. It is expected that the next and third census will be conducted in 2002. Between the censuses, Intercensal Surveys and Interdemographic and Health Surveys have always been conducted. The censuses and surveys have indicated that there are more females than males in Zimbabwe. The country's population is also made up of young people constituting 45% of the population. Such information has assisted Zimbabwe to plan for the emancipation and better provision of both the youth and women.

For Zimbabwe therefore, Mr. President, the Cairo Conference was landmark in that it helped us to refocus and build upon our socio-economic achievements prior to it. Subsequent to the Cairo Conference, Zimbabwe adopted a comprehensive and explicit national population policy. The policy benefited extensively from the Cairo Programme of action in terms of the

methodology used and its contents. Various next issues on population and development are provided for e.g. population and the economy, population and environment, population, health, and education and population, employment and poverty.

In the post - Cairo era Zimbabwe concluded its long-term Perspective Plan, Vision 2020, and elaborated on its long-term Development Strategies. In this regard, Zimbabwe's population is expected to stabilize and to be growing at less than the rate of economic growth. This should be possible as the country implements its Rolling Three Year National Development Plans. These plans provide for Family Planning including Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, Gender Equity, Equality and Empowerment of women, and strategies to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic including mobilization of Resources for Sustainable Development.

Mr. President, a Constitutional Review Commission has been set-up in Zimbabwe consisting of four hundred Zimbabweans. The Review Commission is currently receiving evidence from all Zimbabweans. The representation of women and the youth on that commission is quite significant. The constitutional review process will be able to tackle the topical issues that also constitute our pre-occupation here. Issues of adolescent reproductive health and rights, gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women will be prominent. That again, Mr.

President will further facilitate the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it is evident that efforts to prevent STDs including HIV/AIDS through behavioral change and condom distribution are becoming more effective. However, we should take further action to ensure the continued prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission. The reproductive health programmes at the primary health care levels now include HIV/AIDS prevention activities. Zimbabwe is also making considerable progress in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic through exploration for a comprehensive adolescent sexual reproductive health programme. The programme will prepare our youth for a responsible life, reduction of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

In advancing gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, the momentum created by the Cairo Conference has seen to the establishment of initiatives that promote the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into national policies, programmes and activities. Zimbabwe signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and currently making steady progress in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform. A Gender Policy has now been launched and a Department for Gender Issues has been created in the Office of the President. 80% of all women in Zimbabwe