

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



**STATEMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO AT THE 29TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP
TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME
OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT BEYOND 2014**

Presented by His Excellency, Mr.

Célestin VUNABANDI KANYAMIHIGO

Minister of Planning and Monitoring of the Implementation of the

“Révolution de la modernité”

New York, 22 September 2014

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The surname is spelt incorrectly in the source text – it should be “Kanyamihigo” not “Kanyamihimigo”

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Board,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my sincere congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the 29th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD for short).

The DRC would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, for the quality of his report on the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, on his reappointment as Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund.

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to mention here that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been involved in the entire monitoring and evaluation process for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD leading up to the conclusions of this report. I will mention in particular our involvement in the global survey on ICPD Beyond 2014, in the preparation of the ICPD+20 national report, at the regional meetings between the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Maputo, and between the countries of the African Union in Addis Ababa, and at the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development in New York.

The review of the implementation status of the Programme of Action of the ICPD has revealed significant progress in our country, although there are still a few challenges to overcome.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has in fact emerged from almost two decades of armed conflict, during which the Government's efforts

were turned more towards peacemaking. These efforts enabled the country to reach the completion point for the HIPC Initiative in July 2010, restore economic growth, at an estimated average of 8.1 per cent between 2010 and 2013, and set up an extensive programme to rehabilitate basic socio-economic infrastructure.

It is for this reason that maternal and infant health has improved. The maternal mortality rate fell from nearly 1,800 maternal deaths per one hundred thousand live births in 1998, to 846 deaths per one hundred thousand live births in 2014. The rate of births attended by skilled health workers also improved significantly, rising from 61 per cent in 2001 to 80 per cent in 2014. The infant and youth mortality rate fell from 213 deaths to 104 deaths per thousand live births between 2001 and 2014.

In terms of education, the primary school net enrolment rate increased from 51.7 per cent in 2001 to 91 per cent in 2012. This improvement can be mainly attributed to the provision of free primary education, the promotion of education for girls, and the establishment of an important Government programme for the reconstruction of schools.

As regards gender equality, equity and empowerment, great efforts have been made. In addition to the ratification of international legal instruments, the legal and institutional framework for the promotion of gender equality and child protection has been improved. The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, adopted in February 2006, deals with equal rights between men and women, as well as equality in the management of public affairs. Important reforms are under way which aim to eliminate all provisions within our legal framework that discriminate against women and girls.

At the institutional level, the national policy on gender and the national strategy addressing gender-based violence have been developed and are currently being implemented. Both the proposals to revise the family code and to implement a law on equality are currently being reviewed by Parliament.

In light of the extent of sexual violence against women and girls during the war, the Government has established a legislative reform which

reinforces rape as an offence, and criminalizes all other forms of violence against women and girls, while establishing an appropriate procedure for prosecuting perpetrators.

In spite of the progress made, it is important to mention that the long period of socio-political instability that the DRC experienced during the first decade of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, has hindered its successful implementation.

At present, new issues have emerged within the national priorities and challenges that need to be overcome in order to achieve a proper implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD in the DRC. In particular, these include: (i) organization of the second General Census of the Population and Habitat, in order to update socio-economic data and foster better planning and monitoring of development programmes; (ii) a resurgence in gender-based violence; (iii) continued existence of armed groups resulting in the mass displacement of populations, particularly in the east of the country; (iv) prevalence of a predominantly young population, with all the outcomes this has on education, employment, and sexual and reproductive health; (v) a high fertility rate and an unmet need for family planning; and finally, (vi) protection of the environment, addressing the consequences of climate change and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

To face these challenges, the Government intends to strengthen bilateral and multilateral partnerships on the one hand, and collaborate with civil society and the private sector on the other.

This is why, the Democratic Republic of the Congo asks that the Beyond 2015 framework is broadly participatory, and that it strengthens a universal commitment to human rights, a culture of applying accepted laws and international standards, combating injustice to achieve equality, and rejecting discrimination in all its forms, all while ensuring that everyone has the right to participate fully in society and decision-making.

Mr. President,

The Democratic Republic of the Congo fully agrees with the conclusions of the "Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014". The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is committed to continuing its efforts to implement this programme. In this respect, we would like to reiterate our support at the regional review of the implementation of ICPD Beyond 2014, while recognizing the sovereign right of every country to implement recommendations in accordance with its laws and development priorities, showing strict respect for religious and ethical values as well as for the cultural heritage of its population.

Thank you for your kind attention