



REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**AT THE TWENTY-NINTH
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE
FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr. President,

This twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development affords me an opportunity to reaffirm Guyana's commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the outcome of its review, as well as to contribute to our assessment of progress and prospects in the implementation of the Cairo agenda. The Cairo Conference which adopted the most important international agreement on population issues, provided the foundation and framework of a new people-centred approach to issues of population and development and today, we welcome the opportunity to assess 20 years of progress towards those established development targets.

Mr. President,

The implementation of the ICPD programme engages the Government of Guyana, as well as the society at large through the agency of multiple civil society organizations and actors. Guyana values this partnership with actors and institutions at the national, regional and international levels. Indeed, the demands of implementation go beyond the capacity of national governments or countries acting alone. Hence the enduring importance of international cooperation on these issues as reflected in the Programme of Action. The support of development partners and the UN system, including UNFPA, is therefore highly appreciated.

During the past 20 years, Guyana has pursued a policy for social investment aimed at raising the quality of life for all our people, more so, by

prioritizing the health and educational needs, especially for our women and girls. Guyana has made a considerable investment in expanding and enhancing the delivery of social protection and health care services, including primary health care, and care with respect to sexual and reproductive health, to the treatment of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, the Government continues to make significant strides in the provision of education for our young citizens, including those living in the hinterland and far flung communities, through the expansion and modernization of institutions of learning and vocational programmes for the promotion of non-formal opportunities for education and literacy.

In reviewing the implementation of the ICPD beyond 2014, I wish to highlight some of the following actions which the Government of Guyana has prioritized for furthering the goals of the ICPD. Government has accorded the highest priority to poverty eradication and believes that severe poverty can be eliminated by addressing inequalities. In this regard, we seek to develop, strengthen and implement effective, integrated, coordinated and coherent national strategies, which would also target persons belonging to marginalized or disadvantaged groups, to eradicate poverty and break the cycle of exclusion and inequality.

We also seek to place equal emphasis on gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is our duty as a nation to ensure that there are equal opportunities for women to positions in all sectors of public life and to address public views and values regarding sexism or other forms of discrimination and monitor these on a regular basis as indicators of social development. Likewise, it is also vitally important to adopt and implement legislation, policies, and measures that would prevent, punish and eradicate gender-based violence within and outside of the family, as well as in conflict and post-conflict situations. In this regard, the Government of

Guyana has made provisions in its mandate to revise those laws that exonerate perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

Furthermore, it is our view that investment is needed to build young people's capabilities and equip them with the skills to meet the labour demands of the current and emerging economies. The Government anticipates the implementation of internationally agreed commitments to promote and protect the rights of our women and girls and support early and life-long learning for our children, adolescents and youths. Additionally, my Government will continue to ensure social protection and income security for older persons, with particular consideration for older women and their participation in the design and implementation of policies programmes and plans.

In conclusion, this meeting provides the opportunity for Member States to share best practices, identify emerging issues, and derive practical recommendations for future action with a view to renewing commitment to the Cairo Programme as a central part of the post-2015 development agenda. Guyana remains committed to the continued implementation of this programme and looks forward to addressing the demands of ICPD beyond 2014.

Thank you.