



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE
PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (ICPD)**

NEW YORK, 22nd September, 2014

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by commending the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for convening this Special Session on the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of ICPD and for his report.

Also, I would like to congratulate H.E. Sam Kahamba Kutesa on his election as the President of the 69th Session of the General.

We also commend the ASG Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UNFPA for his leadership and congratulate him on his renewed mandate in office.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Mauritania and Bolivia on behalf of the African Group and the G77 and China respectively.

Mr. President,

Today, we are gathered here to celebrate a landmark event in the UN's history: the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action (PoA) at the historic International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994.

The Cairo conference established the nexus between population and development, which in turn gave rise to a global awareness about issues related to reproductive health and rights, and other related issues especially on women's health.

The Framework of actions for the follow-up to the ICPD beyond 2014, as conveyed to us in the Secretary-General's report of February 2014, serves as the guide to this conference. There is no denying the fact that tremendous gains have been made in area of women's right.

Maternal mortality rates have been drastically reduced.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection and other ^{diseases} of mothers and children has been checked.

Women's and children's life expectancy has been improved.

Girl-child education is increasing ^{and} recognized as crucial to development.

Violence against women and girls is receiving increasing recognition and repudiation.

Sexual and reproductive health commodities are widely available to women and girls.

Traditional practices that have negatively impacted ^{on} women and girls such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriages are ^{on} the decline in several countries.

Better opportunities in life are being opened up for women and girls in education, employment and economic endeavours.

Extreme poverty has to an appreciable extent, been addressed especially with the onset of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

On the whole, the world is a better place now than it was twenty years ago prior to the adoption of the Cairo Declaration and PoA. Despite these remarkable achievements, not all is well with the situation of women and girls all over the world. A lot still needs to be done before we achieve the objectives of the ICPD PoA, and the commitments that we made to advance the condition of women and girls.

Domestic violence is still rampant in many parts of the world.

The merit or otherwise of women's equality and empowerment is still being debated in some societies.

Access to resources such as land, finance and credit is not usually granted to women.

Women are the overwhelming victims of conflicts, where their rights are violated and they are frequently abused.

Despite these setbacks, we still commend UNFPA for its work and engagement with our countries. Nigeria believes that UNFPA's work will greatly contribute to a number of important upcoming processes including the ongoing discussions on Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

The UNFPA in collaboration with the Nigerian Government has undertaken six country programmes in the past decade in the core areas of population and development. As a result of this collaboration, we have witnessed the improvement of our institutional capacity to tackle reproductive health challenges. We have revised our national policy on population; and integrated population, reproductive health and gender issues into the National and State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS & SEEDS).

Mr. President,

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, we should pay due attention to the several challenges that militate against the complete realization of the PoA goals and objectives. We believe that the review clearly reveals the ^{prevalence} practical dimension of gross inequalities in income, wealth distribution, educational attainment, access to health care and opportunities among others, between men and women. These imbalances are more likely to affect the realistic implementation of the PoA,

We note in particular, that the progress towards job creation has been regrettably slow amidst the widespread surge in global population. In the developing and least developed countries that have the fastest rate of population growth, this can indeed be daunting challenge.

In order to address some of these obvious challenges, Nigeria ^{insists on} underscores the need for the global community and in particular, the developed countries to provide adequate resources to areas and regions where progress has been slow, with special attention to least developed countries and fragile states.

We have an urgent responsibility to invest in creating opportunities and a supportive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship particularly for young people. It is

crucial to invest in their education and increase access to information on reproductive health, in order to discourage harmful practices such as early and forced marriages.

Furthermore, we stress that the consensus reached in Cairo in 1994 and its subsequent reviews that have received global acclamation and acceptance should be fully incorporated into the Post-2015 development agenda. We do not however, subscribe to the idea that all reviews especially regional outcomes, should be included in the UN as part of the universally agreed outcome documents.

In terms of concrete suggestions, we call on the international community to evolve effective steps and policies to urgently address challenges relating to environmental sustainability including threats of climate change and heterogeneity of global population demographics.

Governments should also be proactive in planning for developmental consequences of population trends before they unfold. Therefore, there should be adequate and concrete arrangement for Member States to integrate the population and development agenda into their regional and national action plans beyond 2014.

In conclusion, we must advocate for an overall increase in the global support for life of dignity and wellbeing for all people, gender equality, maternal and child health, improvement in universal basic education, more inclusive governance, and bridging the wide gap between the rich and the poor in our societies.

I thank you.

