



STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 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]**

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Your Excellences,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

From the outset, let me affirm that the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD] remains relevant today as it was in 1994 in Cairo.

Since the ICPD, Zimbabwe has made significant progress towards addressing population issues within the context of its development framework. We cannot separate population issues from the overall development agenda.

Mr. President,

We note the great impact urbanisation and internal and international migration has on population dynamics as well as on development. Rapid urbanisation and internal migration are some of the major population and development challenges facing many developing countries, including Zimbabwe. Increased rates of population growth in urban areas have resulted in increased pressure on existing infrastructure, whose rate of expansion has remained lagging behind. Authorities and residents of these areas often grapple with inadequate water, sanitation and energy infrastructure.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe's efforts on population and development have paid significant attention to the human rights underpinnings of the Programme of Action. This has led to impressive improvements in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women, access to family planning, as well as expanded access to education for all. In the course of combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we have also derived crucial lessons which have helped us to strengthen our health systems.

Many developing countries, including my own, continue to grapple with unacceptably high maternal mortality rates as well as infant and neo-natal deaths. We therefore believe that more ground work needs to be covered to ensure that pregnancy and child birth cease to be death traps for women.

Mr. President,

Going forward, I urge all of us here gathered, to do more in addressing other critical matters identified in the Programme of Action such as the needs of elderly people and our youth.

In fulfilling our obligations contained in the Programme of Action, discussions on population matters must always respect the primacy of Member States responsibilities in prioritising interventions and programmes.

In conclusion, let me exhort all of us to rededicate our collective efforts towards fully implementing the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

Mr President, I thank you!