

As written

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (ICPD 1994) PROGRAMME OF ACTION;
GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report seeks to review progress Zimbabwe has made towards the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, Egypt, during the period 5-13 September 1994.
- 1.2 The post Cairo period has seen the formulation of a National Population Policy in Zimbabwe. The National Population Policy seeks to define the Government of Zimbabwe's agenda on population and development as well as affirming the Government's commitment to the adoption and implementation of programmes and strategies aimed at the management of population variables in a manner consistent with the desire for sustainable development.
- 1.3 As part of the population policy formulation process sensitisation workshops were held countrywide in order to capture aspirations and consents of all sectors of the Zimbabwean society,
- 1.4 The progress achieved to date is reviewed below, under three subheadings; Population Policy, Reproductive Health and Gender Population and Development.

2.0 Population Policy

- 2.1 The Government of Zimbabwe recognises the need to mainstream population variables in development planning and management, A national population policy is fundamental to the attainment of this objective,
- 2.2 The development of national population policies and programmes in Zimbabwe started in 1981 when a committee was formed under the auspices of the then Ministry of Health to discuss the institutional framework for developing such policies and programmes. In 1984 a population-planning unit was set up in the Central Statistical Office. As a result of these initiatives! and notwithstanding the absence of an explicit population policy, objectives and programmes for the last decade were set, As a result of these initiatives Zimbabwe has already experienced a significant decline in fertility.
- 2.3 While some elements of a population policy have always been embodied in most programmes of government, it has since been realised that a compartmentalisation of population policy issues does not always result in efficacy, mainly due to the failure to exploit the benefits of synergy. The need of a comprehensive and explicit population policy was further reinforced by a proliferation of social, economic and political issues whose resolution require a holistic approach. The need for nations to formulate comprehensive and explicit national population policies is also underlined in the ICPD 1994 Programme of Action.

2.4 In pursuit of the of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, Government of Zimbabwe with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) developed a comprehensive and explicit population policy for the nation. The ultimate goal of the national population policy is to achieve high standards of living of the people through influencing population variables and development trends in a desirable direction which can contribute to the achievement of economic, social and other collective goals of the nation. The policy outlines sector goals which collectively lead to the achievement of the overall objective. Among these goals are: -

- management of the economy aimed at high sustainable growth and equitable distribution of benefits at the same time promoting a population growth that is sustainable;
- education, especially for girls;
- gender equity and equality;
- infant, child and maternal mortality reduction; and
- Provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning.

2.5 Government of Zimbabwe realises that the mainstreaming of population variables in the development process is contingent upon the establishment of the requisite institutional mechanisms and an enabling environment, at all levels of society. To that end Government of

Zimbabwe established institutional structures for integrated population and development planning.

2.5.1 At the national level Government of Zimbabwe has established the National Population Council of Ministers (NPC) under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Planning. The National Population Council of Ministers is supported by a Population Forum of Senior Government Officials and representatives from non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The Population Forum of Senior Government Officials is expected to deliberate on population matters as they arise and recommend to the National Population Councils of Ministers and in turn the National Population Council of Ministers to Cabinet where appropriate decisions will be made.

2.5.2 The Population Forum of Senior Government Officials is also mandated to backstop the Population and Development Planning Section of the National Economic Planning Commission, The National Economic Planning Commission is responsible for co-ordinating national development plans and programmes within the context of broad aspirations and goals outlined in the National Long Term Perspective Plan (Vision 2020). The National Economic Planning Commission, through its Population and Development Planning section (PDPS) is also responsible for the monitoring and co-ordination of the national population programme as well as the promotion of integrated population and development planning. In carrying out its activities the National Economic Planning

Commission is partnered by both public and private sector organisations as well as the non-governmental organisations

2.5.3 In an effort to mainstream population variables in development efforts at the sub-national level the Population and Development Planning Section of the National Economic Planning Commission has established working relations with other planning structures i.e. the Provincial and Rural District Development Committees (PDCs and RDDCs).

3.0 *Reproductive Health*

3.1 Government of Zimbabwe recognises the importance of reproductive health in human development, Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and process This implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and enjoy the freedom to choose if, when and how often to do so.

3.2 Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has committed itself to the improvement of reproductive health. Over the last 17 years, the Government with assistance from several donor organisations has made substantial investments establishing and strengthening a Maternal and Child Health including Family Planning (MCHIFP) programme, the girl child's access to education, improving

the status of women and expanding economic opportunities for women,

3.3 Government of Zimbabwe realises that for a variety of reasons the reproductive health situation in Zimbabwe still remains far from being adequate. In this regard government of Zimbabwe has embarked upon various programmes aimed at improving reproductive health in the country. These are reviewed below,

3.3.1 Health Reform Programme

In 1996 the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare embarked on a Health Reform programme, The programme is designed to bring the health delivery system in line with the liberalised economic environment, declining public expenditure on health and the need to create a decentralised health delivery system that is responsive to the needs of the people. The goal of the Health Sector Reform Programme is stated as “to provide equity in health and improving the quality of life through a package of district core health services. This package includes immunisation, health promotion, reproductive health including family planning, safe and essential drugs, environmental health, water and sanitation, and manpower planning and training.

3.3.2 National Health Strategic Plan, 1997 - 2007

Government of Zimbabwe through its Ministry of Health and Child Welfare has developed a National Health

Strategic Plan (1997 - 2007). The strategic plan suggests the following strategies: -

- Reforming the health sector in line with the liberalised economic environment and Government of Zimbabwe's thrust towards a decentralised provision of public goods and services.
- Strengthening the Primary Health Care strategy emphasising a balance between preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services as well as distribution of responsibilities between communities and government as prominent features of PHC.
- Ensuring partnerships with the non-governmental organisations and the private sector in health care provision, and health financing,
- Ensuring resource availability and sustainability.

3.3.3 Three Year *Rolling Plan for the Health Sector*

Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare developed its first three-year Rolling Plan for the Health Sector, The three-year Rolling Plan, currently being implemented, focuses on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. In the HIV/AIDS area, the Rolling Plan seeks to establish a National AIDS Council as the co-ordinating body for HIV/AIDS programmes, strengthen the National Adolescent Education programme as well as strengthen community-based prevention and care programmes. In the area of reproductive health the three-year Rolling Plan accords priority to the following: -

- Establishment of a national reproductive health care programme.

- Development of organisational and administrative structures of the national reproductive health care programme,
- Strengthening co-ordination of the national reproductive health programme.
- Development of standards, guidelines and protocols for the management of common reproductive health problems,
- Training of service providers,
- Strengthening of family planning service delivery,
- Integration of the management of maternity services.
- 3 Establishment of cervical screening services.
- Conducting of reproductive health research.
- Strengthening post natal care and service delivery
- Development of adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes.

3.4.4 *The National Family Planning Strategy, 1997 - 2002*

The Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC), a quasi-governmental organisation, established in 1985 to co-ordinate and implement family planning programmes, including some components of reproductive health, has developed a National Family Planning Strategy, 1997 -2002. The objectives of the strategy are to reduce the total fertility rate from 4,3 to 3,5 children per woman and to increase programmatic and financial sustainability of the national family planning programme. The strategy places emphasis on; advocacy for reproductive health in the area of HIV/AIDS, behaviour change communication and counselling, reaching previously under served groups such as men and youth,

increased involvement of the private sector in the funding and implementation of family planning services and integration of reproductive health services particularly STI/HIV information and management,

3.3.5 NGO *Development Initiative Project, 1997 - 2002*

With the worsening of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, NGOs are playing an increasingly more important role in the prevention and control of HIV as well as dealing with the social impact of the epidemic, Zimbabwe boasts of a presence of over 70 local and international NGOs and AIDS Support Organisations actively involved in the provision of HIV/AIDS prevention services, The non-governmental organisations have, with assistance from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), embarked on the NGO Development Project (1997 - 2002) - a project aimed at strengthening NGO response capability in HIV/AIDS prevention and control,

4.0 *Gender Population and Development*

- 4.1 The demographic situation of Zimbabwe indicates that 52% of the population is female. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is therefore a highly important end in itself as well as essential for the achievement of sustainable development.
- 4.2 Since independence, in 1980, the Government of Zimbabwe has taken steps to improve the status of women, The steps are reviewed below.

4.2.1 *Equal Employment Opportunities*

The Labour Laws of Zimbabwe, particularly the Labour Relations Act, make it a criminal offence to discriminate prospective employees on the grounds of sex.

4.2.2 *Affirmative Action in Tertiary Education*

The University of Zimbabwe has introduced affirmative action in favour of female students in its enrolment policies in a bid to address the gender imbalance in access to tertiary education,

4.2.3 *Establishment/Strengthening of institutions on Gender Issues*

Government of Zimbabwe has strengthened as well as established institutions that are responsible for mainstreaming gender factors/variables in the development process. These include the Gender Issues Unit in the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Co-operatives and the Department of Gender Issues in the Office of the President and Cabinet. The two institutions are mandated to formulate policies on gender and overseeing their implementation and review sectoral policies and programmes in order to make them more gender sensitive.

4.2.4 Review and Repeal of Laws and Regulations that Discriminate Against Women

The Government of Zimbabwe continues to direct efforts towards the review and repeal of laws that discriminate against women, hinder their progress in society and constrain their access to productive assets such as land and capital. The focus has been on a review and repeal of certain customary laws and traditions that govern marriages and inheritance. In 1997 the Government of Zimbabwe enacted the Administration of Estates (Amendment) Act. This law radically changes inheritance laws in favour of women who hitherto to its enactment were at a disadvantage.

4.2.5 Ratification of the Convention of Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Government of Zimbabwe, with assistance from UNIFEM, produced its first report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in October 1995. The report examines each article of the convention and provides specific information on legal and administrative measures in place, developments that have taken place and the legal, cultural and social stumbling blocks to women's access to and full employment of their rights.

4.2.6 *Launch of a Gender Consultative Forum*

A Gender Consultative Forum was launched in 1998. **The** major objective of the forum is to reinforce post-Beijing strategies and activities, provide a forum for the exchange of information on gender development and initiatives among stakeholders and the identification of projects and funding sources.

4.2.7 *Gender Training and Sensitisation Workshops*

The post ICPD 1994 and Beijing 1995 period has seen concerted efforts in gender training of different groups of the Zimbabwean society. The period saw Government of Zimbabwe implementing, with the financial and technical assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and UNICEF, a Gender Equity in Education project. The project's focus is on changing women and men's perceptions, attitudes, values and aspirations on gender issues at the individual, family, community and institutional levels.

The Gender Issues Unit in the Ministry of National Affairs is carrying out sensitisation workshop for women across the country. The workshops are aimed at sensitising women on gender issues, their rights and implementation of conventions to benefit women.

Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of National Employment Creation and Co-operatives, with

support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is implementing a Women in Politics Project,

4.2.8 Formulation of a Gender Policy

Government of Zimbabwe is in the process of formulating a Gender Policy. The policy aims at concretising broad aspirations on Gender and Women in development outlined in the National Long-Term Perspective (Vision 2020) document.