

As written

~~SAINT LUCIA~~

STATEMENT BY MR EZRA JN. BAPTISTE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
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THANK YOU MISTER/MADAME PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED
DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT IS INDEED AN HONOUR FOR ME TO ADDRESS THIS FORUM. I
WOULD LIKE TO THANK UNFPA AND THE GOVERNMENT AND
PEOPLE OF HOLLAND FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

MISTER/MADAM PRESIDENT, SAINT LUCIA'S PARTICIPATION IN
THE ICPD WAS A SIGNAL OF ITS INTENTION TO PLAY ITS PART IN
ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL CONCERNS OF POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT. ON THIS OCCASION (ICPD+5), I WISH TO
HIGHLIGHT BRIEFLY THE MAJOR EFFORTS WHICH ARE BEING
EMBARKED UPON AS WELL AS THE CONSTRAINTS WHICH ARE
BEING ENCOUNTERED.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE AREA OF
LEGAL REFORM WITH THE ENACTMENT LEGISLATION TO
ADDRESS MALE RESPONSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION, AND ALL
FORMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE. HOWEVER,
LACK OF COMPLEMENTARITY IN LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO
THE CHILD NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED.

MORE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE AREA OF SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH THAN IN THE AREA OF REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS. SRH SERVICES HAVE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE
COUNSELLING ON HUMAN SEXUALITY, RESPONSIBLE

PARENTHOOD, EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF STD's AND HIV/AIDS, AND THE PROMOTION, SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH QUALITY CONDOMS. IT IS HOPED THAT THESE INTERVENTIONS COMBINED WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WILL HELP TO REDUCE THE PROPORTION OF EARLY TEEN BIRTHS FROM 20% TO 15% BY ICPD+10. MEANWHILE THERE IS AN ENSUING PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE ISSUE OF READMITTANCE OF EARLY TEEN MOTHERS INTO THE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SYSTEM AS A GENERAL RULE.

SAINT LUCIA HAS ADVANCED THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATING POPULATION VARIABLES INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN TWO WAYS: 1. AN EXPLICIT POPULATION POLICY IS BEING FINALIZED AND WILL SOON BE ADOPTED; 2. A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNIT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AS THE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM TO DRIVE THE PROCESS.

MISTER/MADAM PRESIDENT, A 1995 SURVEY REVEALED THAT 25% OF THE POPULATION IS BELOW THE POVERTY LINE. PART OF THE INTERVENTION TO REDUCE POVERTY IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POVERTY REDUCTION FUND AS A MECHANISM TO PROCURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES. WE WELCOME THE SHARING OF COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AS WE SEEK TO CONSOLIDATE THIS NEW APPROACH.

IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION, AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE UNMET DEMAND FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION BY INCREASING ACCESS FROM 54% TO 60% IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS. HOWEVER, MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ADDRESS THE UNACCEPTABLE RATE OF ILLITERACY AMONG THE ADULT POPULATION. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT REMAINS THE CORNERSTONE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

MISTER/MADAM PRESIDENT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE MAJOR CONSTRAINTS WE FACE IN ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON ALL FRONT ARE THE LACK OF FINANCIAL, HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WOULD BE WELCOME IN

AREAS SUCH AS INSTITUTIONAL AND CAPACITY BUILDING, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW, MANAGEMENT AUDITS, FINANCIAL REFORM, INFRA STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT, JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE REFORM..

MISTER/MADAM CERTAIN SITUATIONS, TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS ARE POSING SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO US.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL THESE INCLUDE:

- IMPORTED INFLATION AND HIGH PRICES
- INCREASING INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
- ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION CAUSED BY NATURAL DISASTERS AND HUMAN ACTION
- FAMILY DISINTEGRATION
- HIGH TEEN FERTILITY
- DISENCHANTMENT AMONG THE YOUTH
- THE FRAGILITY AND VULNERABILITY OF OF SMALL ISLAND ECONOMY

AT THE EXTERNAL LEVEL, THE CHALLENGES ARE RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING:

- PROSPECT OF LOW PRICES FOR BANANAS UPON THE WITHDRAWAL OF PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET
- DWINDLING GRANT RESOURCES

- STRINGENT CONDITIONALITIES ON MULTILATERAL LOAN FUNDING
- DEMONSTRATION EFFECT OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES ON THE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF THE POPULATION
- TRENDS AND IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION IN ALL RESPECTS

MISTER/MADAM PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT IS TAKING STEPS TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES. IN THE AREA OF GOVERNANCE, DECENTRALIZATION OF AUTHORITY IS BEING PROMOTED TO ENSURE PARTICIPATION AT ALL LEVELS. INCREASINGLY, GOVERNMENT IS MOVING TOWARDS PLAYING A FACILITATION ROLE RATHER THAN AN OPERATIONAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

IN CONCLUSION, MISTER/MADAM PRESIDENT, I WISH TO STATE THAT SAINT LUCIA REMAINS COMMITTED TO PURSUING THE GOALS OF THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY OUR PART AND LOOK FORWARD TO JOINING DELEGATES IN ANOTHER FORUM TO SHARE EXPERIENCES IN POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

I THANK YOU.