

ZAMBIA'S STATEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION DELIVERED BY
HONOURABLE GODFREY SIMASIKU, M.P AND DEPUTY
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT
THE HAGUE FORUM 8-12 FEBRUARY, 1999, THE
NETHERLANDS.

(DELIVERED ON THURSDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1999)

Mr. President

Dr **Sadik**, Executive Director of UNFPA

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gen **tlemen**

On behalf of the Zambian Government, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to UNFPA for organising this important meeting. I also wish to pay tribute to the Netherlands Government for hosting the meeting. Zambia has indeed taken this opportunity to share her experience in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

Mr. President, allow me to go back in history. As you are all aware, between 1914 and 1918, there was a First World War and from 1939 to 1945, was the Second World War. These wars were fought and have since been forgotten. But in Africa today and in Zambia in particular, we are faced with a third world war- a war against poverty and diseases.

Poverty **in** Zambia is **characterised** by insufficient incomes and **productive** resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods and basic **needs**. The Poverty levels are at 70% - and Government has put in place a poverty reduction plan to reduce **poverty levels to 50% by the** year 2004.

HIV/AIDS has continued to be a major cause of mortality and morbidity. The HIV prevalence rate among adults is estimated to be 19.9% with ages in the age groups 20-29 for females and 30-39 for males. Maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates remain high and our life expectancy is below 50 years.

The socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS cannot be overstated. The disease has been affecting the most productive persons of **our population**. The problem has culminated into the increases in the number of orphans, opportunistic diseases like TB and demand on the health care system in the country. HIV/AIDS has affected all sectors and the Government is finding means and ways to stop the disease from spreading further.

Despite these problems, Zambia has made considerable progress towards the attainment of some ICPD goals. The Government of **the** Republic of Zambia acknowledges that population is both the beneficiary and agent for development. It **recognises** the role that population factors play in national development process. It was therefore in this recognition that Zambia adopted a National Population Policy in 1989. The policy was later revised to incorporate

the emerging concerns of gender, youth problems, HIV/AIDS, Environment, poverty alleviation, and the broader concept of reproductive health that encompasses sexuality and adolescent concerns which had not been perceived as societal problems in the past.

Your Excellencies, soon after the ICPD, efforts were made **to** improve quality of care in health services. This was done through training of health service providers and upgrading of all health centres with facilities to enable them provide effective reproductive health services. In 1997, the Ministry of health in collaboration with stakeholders adopted the Family Planning Policy Framework, Standards and Guidelines to enable all service providers provide quality and uniform services. It is worth noting that, policies in reproductive health on safe motherhood, adolescent and HIV/AIDS have been drafted.

Mr. President, gender equality, equity and empowerment of women has been of concern in Zambia. Gender in Development Division has been established in Cabinet Office to coordinate gender and development programmes in the country. There are of course other achievements in the area of gender equality, equity and empowerment of women. These include:

- Drafting of a National Gender Policy and the Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women
- Gender mainstreaming into the macro-economic policy framework including **the** budgeting process and procedures,

- **Establishment of a gender statistics unit in the Central Statistics Office to generate gender specific statistics**
- setting up of a programme for the advancement of girls education
- Revision of existing education curriculum materials to avoid assigning gender stereotypic roles.

Mr. President, your Excellencies, we do not underestimate the strong partnership and vital contribution of the role civil organizations in policy formulation and implementation of population programmes. **NGOs** have also played a crucial role in complimenting Government efforts to mobilise resources for population programmes. We also appreciate the continued financial support to population programmes that both bilateral and multilateral organisations render to our country.

Your Excellency, withholding of Balance of Payments and pledged support by our co-operating partners at both bilateral and multilateral levels over the past 20 months has resulted into a negative 2% growth of our economy in 1998 from positive growth rates of over 3 % in 1996 and 6% in 1997. Consequently, 60% of our earning from non-traditional exports were channeled to debt servicing at the expense of social sector facilities like schools, clinics and hospitals. Funding to these sectors was reduced in some cases to below 50% budgeted levels

Despite the **Zambian** government committing resources to the **Cairo** programme of Action, we are in most cases unable to meet the

percentage we as a government pledged, because of the servicing of the debt, which is a priority to our donors. As much **as it is our wish** to fulfill this commitment, we remain a highly indebted country and as such, we transfer most of our limited resources which could be **used** in population and development related programmes to the world Bank and **IMF** in the debt recovery programme. The money being used to service the debt would go a long way in improving the quality of life of our citizens. We look forward to seeing the Cairo Vision a reality to Zambia.