



**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland
to the United Nations**

Statement by

**H.E. Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini
The Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland**

**At the
General Assembly – Sixty-Ninth Session**

**Special Session of the General Assembly on the Follow-up to the
Programme of Action of the International Conference on
Population and Development**

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General Assembly Hall**

On behalf of His Majesty the Ingwenyama King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Indlovukazi (Queen Mother), the Government and the People of the Kingdom of Swaziland it gives me great pleasure to be part of this special session on the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD), and to map a way forward for its implementation beyond 2014 following its indefinite extension by the UN General Assembly. I am confident that at the end of our deliberations, we will reach a consensus on how best to incorporate the ICPD Programme of Action as an integral part of a transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda.

We have come a long way since the landmark International Conference on Population and Development was held in 1994 in Cairo, Egypt, where, 179 nations of the world, reached a consensus on a forward looking Programme of Action which was to guide the implementation of population programmes for the next twenty years. Indeed, the ICPD Programme of Action, which shifted focus from the attainment of demographic targets by placing people at the centre of development with a strong emphasis on human rights, has been the guiding framework, for the development and implementation of population policies and programmes in the past twenty years and shall continue to be even in future.

Mr. President,

Since Cairo, The Government of Kingdom of Eswatini has made major strides in putting into place the requisite policy, legal and institutional frameworks that have a direct bearing on population related outcomes. These include the National Population Policy, National Gender Policy and; National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights. The policy frameworks are anchored on the ICPD principle that every citizen is entitled to fundamental human rights and freedoms, irrespective of gender, culture, religion, age, race and economic status and as articulated in our constitution.

On the legislative front, the Kingdom has enacted the requisite laws including the: Girls and Women Protection Act; Maintenance Act; People Trafficking and People (Prohibition) Act) and; Children's Protection and Welfare Act. The Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Bill has been drafted and is under review. Most importantly, the country adopted our Constitution in 2005 which enshrines a Bill of Rights.

The strides we have made in terms of putting in place the institutional mechanisms include the creation of a: fully fledged ministry dedicated to youth affairs; National Population Unit; National Gender and Family Issues Unit; Sexual and Reproductive Health Unit; National Youth Council; National Coordination Children's Unit and; Prevention of People Trafficking and People Smuggling.

Mr. President,

At this juncture, may I underscore that the Government of Swaziland has taken action, with the support of development partners, to operationalise these policies through various

programmes targeting particularly the most vulnerable members of our society. We are working tirelessly to upscale programmes to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of all Swazis, including adolescents, and ensuring that they are enabled to exercise the basic right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, and to be provided with the information and services to do so. An action worth emphasizing that has been taken to ensure universal access is, the strengthening of the Logistics Management Information System which has resulted in the efficient distribution of family planning commodities.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Eswatini has made significant progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the latest National HIV Ante Natal Serosurveillance Survey results indicate that HIV prevalence amongst the age group 15-19 has giving a glimmer of hope that the epidemic could be controlled if the current interventions are scaled up. These include utilizing effective culturally based interventions that target adolescents and youth including rites that promote chastity such as the reed dance “Umhlanga”, “Umcwasho” (a public display of abstinence) for girls and “Lusekwane” (a coming of age ceremony) for boys.

Whilst the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini is fully committed to ensuring our endeavour to realize our national development goals and aspirations, including those related to the ICPD Programme of Action the results of the national progress review point to gaps in its implementation. These are due to various factor including, the world financial and economic crisis which had an adverse impact on the domestic economy as was manifest in the sluggish annual growth rate of below one percent and accompanying fiscal challenges. The volatile food and energy prices, food insecurity, as well as the difficulties posed by climate change, have further aggravated the situation. These adverse developments have continued to curtail the country’s ability to invest in the economic and social sectors. However the economy is now showing signs of recovery and growth is expected in the middle term.

In concluding, may I re-affirm the full commitment of the Government of Swaziland to the International Conference on Population and Development, Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA) which is as relevant today as it was when it came into being close to twenty years ago. Our Government will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the gaps that have been noted through the operational review are addressed. However we are constrained by lack of resources in the pursuit of this noble goal. Therefore may I, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, take this opportunity to appeal to our development partners to commit and honour their pledges towards the implementation of the ICPD-PoA beyond 2014.

I THANK YOU!!!