

Regional Ministerial Review Conference on DND/ICPD at 10

Opening Statement

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Honourable Minister of Planning of the Republic of Senegal,
Madame the Director of UNFPA Africa Division,
Honourable Parliamentarians,
Heads of Agencies,
Members of the ICPD Follow-up Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this African city and to this Conference where we will review the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I thank the Government of the Republic of Senegal for agreeing to host this Conference and for offering us facilities to make our work easier. The Dakar-Ngor Declaration was born in this city and it is only appropriate that we return here to review its implementation.

Both the Dakar-Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the ICPD- have become important landmarks in the areas of population and development. They have provided us the platform for evaluating what has been achieved during the past 10 years and what remains to be done in the area of implementation. At this Conference, in the next few days, we will hear success stories; we will assess the problems and constraints, which have impeded the implementation of the Dakar-Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the ICPD, and we will identify factors that can promote further implementation.

Distinguished Guests,

You will recall that the General Assembly of the United Nations mandated the Economic Commission for Africa to monitor and evaluate the Programme of Action of the ICPD. In pursuit of this task, the ECA Conference of Ministers had previously created a Follow-up Committee to monitor the Dakar-Ngor Declaration. That Committee was also given the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD. Since 1995, the Follow-up Committee met four times while its Working Group met three times. I thank the members of the Committee and the Working Group for the good work they have done over the years.

As you know the Follow-up Committee is traditionally composed of only a few African countries. But population and development issues are too important to be left to a few countries. Therefore, because of the importance and significance of this 10th anniversary review, the Follow-up Committee has been expanded to include representatives of all African countries. Consequently, in order to facilitate the work of this Conference, we are proposing that the Bureau of the Follow-up Committee be expanded to include five Vice Chairmen and five Rapporteurs from each African sub-region.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Distinguished Guests,

The review process for the 10th anniversary of the ICPD has been a long one and I would like to thank those who have worked on it painstakingly to get us to this point where we are all wiser about the obstacles, which have impeded implementation in the last ten years. I thank our member States for responding to the survey questionnaires and for preparing country reports. I thank the staff of Sustainable Development Division at the ECA for analyzing the questionnaires and reports, and for preparing the first draft of the Report before you. I thank the members of the Drafting Committee - made up of a UNFPA Representative, UNFPA-CST Advisers, African Union

staff and ECA staff. I also want to thank the Readers Group, whose members reviewed and made comments on the draft Report as well as countless others who have contributed to its preparation.

Although we experienced some difficulties in the process of conducting this ICPD+10 evaluation, I am happy to report that we were able to resolve all difficulties with your help and guidance. I pledge our commitment to finalizing the draft before you and producing a high quality Regional Report for Africa, which reflects your contributions.

Distinguished Guests,

In the days ahead, you will be working to produce a Ministerial Declaration reflecting your decisions and the future course of implementation of the DND and ICPD-Programme of Action over the next ten years. Your Declaration will guide our member States on the issues we need to focus on in order to promote further implementation of the DND and the Programme of Action of the ICPD. Your task is not an easy one but I am confident that with the critical mass of your expertise, the outcomes of our deliberations will reflect the realities on the ground. Africa has many problems confronting it and these should be addressed and recommendations made for their resolution.

I look forward to seeing the conclusions and recommendations of our meeting here and wish you all success.
