

AFRICAN UNION

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## JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION OF THE SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF OUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION COMMISSION

We, Members of the African Population Commission, gathered at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa from July 16 to 17, 2007 on the occasion of the Sixth Ordinary Session of our General Assembly which focused on the theme "*Policy Implications of the State of African Population Report 2006*".

### RECALLING:

1. The Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000.
2. The Plan of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population and Development.
3. The Continental Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy Framework (2005) and the Maputo Plan of Action for its operationalization (2006) of the African Union;
4. The Africa Health Strategy adopted by the AU Conference of Ministers of Health in April 2007 and endorsed by the Assembly.
5. The African Regional Nutrition Strategy
6. The Accra Communiqué on Safe Motherhood adopted in November 2006 during the West Africa Regional Forum.
7. The Mafikeng Declaration on Population and Development adopted during the Population and Development in Africa-Research and Policy Dialogue in Africa Conference in March 2007.
8. The African Common Position on Africa fit for children adopted in Cairo in 2001.
9. The African Youth Charter

## 10. Second Decade on Education Plan of Action

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that rapid population growth can undermine sustainable social and economic development in Africa

**AWARE** that:

- The African population remains youthful which poses both opportunities and challenges.
- Gender inequality persists in all spheres, particularly in the labour force participation and decision making.
- As age dependency shrinks greater productivity and higher incomes are possible depending on social and economic policy responses of individual countries.
- Aware that the demographic dividend concealed in Africa's youthful population is not automatic but depends on policy responses;

**CONCERNED** that:

- Africa is not on track to attain the Millennium Development Goals almost half way through the target period;
- Debate on population and development has been confined to population size and growth rate ignoring aspects of the age structure and the implications of population dynamics to socio-economic development and poverty reduction.
- HIV and AIDS is having a devastating impact on political, social and economic development in the face of poverty and other challenges; and that both maternal and infant mortality in Africa remain high and that it is most likely that the MDG target of reducing maternal and infant mortality by 2015 will not be met.

**We therefore, COMMIT ourselves to:**

1. Increase investment in expanding and repositioning family planning as an integral part of sexual and reproductive health and socio-economic development in line with the Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the ICPD Plan of Action.
2. Integrate population variables in development planning in order to accelerate progress towards the attainment of the MDGs.
3. Increase investment in programmes that deal with the health of youth, women and children in line with the Africa Health Strategy and

advocate for political, economic and social reforms that ensures the participation of youth in society.

4. Integrate and mainstream gender into population and development, women's empowerment including engagement to combat gender-based violence.
5. Put in place policies and programmes that keep youth and adolescents in school, with particular focus on the girl child since education for girls and women contributes to better health-seeking behaviour, improved uptake of family planning, reduces infant and maternal mortality rates and improves the living conditions of the family, in particular, and the society, in general .
6. Make primary education compulsory and free and that technical and professional training be developed to absorb those who are excluded from the general education system so as to give everyone the opportunity to be involved in economic development.
7. Advocate for the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty.
8. Promote south-south collaboration on population and development especially through regional networks, sharing of experiences and best practices;
9. Speed up progress on delivery of basic health services and interventions by renewing commitment to prioritize, allocate resources, and accelerating child survival efforts that incorporate several high-impact but standardized "packages" of health interventions within African countries.
10. Advocate for the central role of maternal health in Africa's development and commit to giving urgent priority to delivering affordable, high quality and accessible maternal health care services.
11. Scale up responses to HIV/AIDS, tuberculoses and malaria in line with the Abuja Call for Accelerated Action against these three diseases including the call of AU Heads of State on reduction of mortality.
12. Advocate for the implementation of the African Union Migration Policy Framework;
13. Address issues of social protection and social security especially for the elderly, orphans and vulnerable children.
14. Use African Union's united strong voice to work with developed countries to launch, by the year 2008, a group of "Quick Win" actions (especially in education and health sectors) to promote economic

growth of the continent so as to save and improve the lives of millions of people.

15. Press for meaningful debt relief, debt cancellation, and more generous and predictable official development assistance (ODA). But more importantly, the African Union should press for favourable terms of trade and access to developed country markets. Only through fair trade and access to markets will Africa find real and long lasting answers to poverty eradication on the continent.
16. **Strengthening the institutional capacity for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the national population policies including the collection, management and use of statistics;**
17. **Involve the civil society in active partnership for service delivery and advocacy**

#### **WE CALL UPON:**

18. Member States to commit themselves to the strengthening of the APC by supporting activities and effective participation of its delegations to relevant meetings at the APC.
19. Member States to invest and address the causes of youth migration from the continent and its implications on the age structure and the overall plan for sustainable growth.
20. Development Partners to sustain their support to national, regional and continental efforts to promote population and development;
21. The African Union Commission in collaboration with the ECA, UNFPA and other partners, to coordinate the review of ICPD+15 and report to our next Session; **ALSO REQUEST** the Commission to facilitate the signing of the Sino-Africa Cooperation Agreement in the areas of population and sexual and reproductive health as well as ensure its operationalization.
22. The AU Commission in collaboration with Partners, to follow up the implementation of this Declaration and other recommendations of our Session and report to our next Session.

**Sandton Convention Centre,  
Johannesburg, South Africa,  
July 17, 2007**