

Statement to the Hague Forum 8-12 February 1999

As written

The Republic of Sudan

**Statement by H.E. Col. Gatluak Deng Garang,
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**At the Hague Forum on
the ICPD⁺⁵**

**The Hague, the Netherlands
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Mr. Chairman, honourable delegates,
ladies and gentlemen,

This forum is indeed an important occasion for all countries to present their quinquennial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the ICPD Plan of Action (PoA). It is in fact a good opportunity to share hard-gained experiences, as well as to state a process that will re-energize efforts to fully implement the PoA agreed upon at the 1994 ICPD at the global and national levels.

The Sudan, the largest country in Africa, is a country of a great ethnical and cultural diversity. The population of Sudan according to the 1993 population census was 25.6 million and was estimated to be 29.5 million in 1998. If it grows by the prevailing rate of 2.9%, the population of Sudan will double in 27 years.

In terms of socio-demographic indicators, Sudan can be ranked as one of the least developed countries within the region of eastern and central countries of Africa. Furthermore, Sudan Human Development Index (HDI) rank, was 157 out of 174 countries according to the UNDP human development report of 1998.

Hence, the government of Sudan (GOS) is highly concerned with providing a better quality of life for the people of Sudan. The government strategies for sustainable human development are reflected in the ten-years (1992-2002) Comprehensive National Strategy.

Sustainable development remains one of the most important challenges facing humanity as it approaches the 3rd millennium.

The ICPD/PoA guides the world efforts towards a balance between population growth and sustainable development. However, failure to accelerate economic growth and development would limit national capacities to respond to the future challenges.

In the field of population and development in Sudan, the establishment of the Sudan National Population Council (SNPC) in the aftermath of the ICPD in December 1994, was a strong political commitment and one of the major strides to implement ICPD/PoA

at the national level. In addition, Sudan has effectively participated in a number of regional and international meetings that recommended various means of accelerating the implementation of ICPD/PoA.

Distinguished Participants,

As you are all aware, at the 1994 ICPD, the international community committed itself to three strategic areas: namely; Reproductive health including family planning and sexual health, advocacy and population and development strategies.

In the case of Sudan, the on-going UNFPA programme cycle (1997-2001) consisted of the above mentioned sub-programmes. Projects are framed within the sub-programmes to contribute towards achieving programme goals and objectives. In this context, UNFPA is currently supporting 14 RH/FP projects, 4 advocacy projects and 3 population and development strategy projects. The aim is to move gradually from the project approach to the programme approach.

Despite the concerted efforts made by the government of Sudan to address the various reproductive health issues, the infant, child and maternal mortality rates are still alarmingly high. Hence, the culmination of reproductive health policy in Sudan is to reduce these rates.

Recently, the Women in Development Coordinating Unit (WIDCU) within the Ministry of Social Planning produced a national plan of action for the advancement of women.

Realizing the importance of advocacy in the successful implementation of the population policy and programmes, the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture has been entrusted with the task of coordinating advocacy activities in support of population policy, under the UNFPA-funded " Advocacy sub-programme ".

However, to round-up the institutional framework of population activities and facilitate the crystallization of the political commitment, a Population Committee was established within the National Assembly and youth advocacy-oriented activities has been

established within the Sudanese Family Planning Association and the federal Ministry of Education.

With regard to population and development strategy, the government of Sudan is concerned with strengthening the capacity building of the institutions mandated for the provision of population-related data, research-based information, training in the field of population and development. In addition to the institution responsible for coordinating the population activities for the purpose of the national population policy formulation.

In its capacity as the coordinator of population activities in Sudan, the SNPC/GS has been actively engaged in ensuring the integration of population variables into development plans. Population is already- being taken into account in key national policy- initiatives such as the 2nd three years national programme. However, efforts are still needed to ensure the integration in all sectors and at all levels.

Distinguished participants,

As an extension of Sudan Comprehensive National Strategy- a population strategy' was officially endorsed in 1995. Based on this population strategy a policy document was prepared and developed further. However, the new areas of focus, both at national and international levels necessitates the revision of the policy document. To this effect the process of revising the national population policy was began in 1997. It is planned that the 5th National Population Conference will be held this month under the auspices of the president for the firm adoption of the national population policy- as a new government policy- on population and development issues in Sudan.

However, the successful implementation of the national population policy- demands strategic leadership at various levels, to ensure that the government, with the active participation of the civil society, work in harmony in the design, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of population and development programmes.

In this regard, apart from the national population council, eight state population councils (out of 26) are established in line with the federal system of governance. The establishment of the state population councils is viewed as a necessary- precondition for popular participation in the implementation process. However, the meager resource allocated for this purpose, hampered the process of establishing the remaining state population councils.

Given the diversified population activities dispersed over the sectors, states and localities, the monitoring and evaluation process even becomes very- costly in case of Sudan.

Distinguished participants,

It is worth mentioning here that, due to the long-standing civil war and other manmade and natural disasters, Sudan is undergoing a chain of continuous displacement and resettlement processes, which are fading further any hopes for development.

Thus, Sudan government priorities are rotating around putting an end to the war and addressing its negative consequences on population development as prerequisites to any- development plans and programmes.

In view of the above, the ICPD quantitative targets are still difficult and illusive to attain as far as Sudan is concerned. Thus, Sudan is advocating a stronger role for UNFPA and other donor agencies to play- in support of population programme in Sudan and other similar countries who are most in need. However, Sudan government will make every effort to ensure sustainability.

Lastly, I would like to extend the government of Sudan's intrinsic gratitude's to UNFPA's generous support to the population activities in Sudan.