

As written

PRESENTATION AT THE HAGUE FORUM FOR THE ICPD+5

The Government of Swaziland (GOS) acknowledges that the objectives of the ICPD Plan of Action (POA) can only be realised through the creation of an enabling environment, which among other things includes proper legislation.

The ICPD POA has been given prominence in the long term plan National Development Strategy and the short term plan Economic and Social Reform Agenda with the view to integrate population issues in economic planning and development.

Swaziland's commitment to the improvement of the quality of life for all individuals is clearly articulated in the long term development strategy and vision which was formulated by all the major stakeholders in the country.

The vision is as follows:

“By the year 2022 the Kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability”.

What this vision states is that 25 years from now the kingdom of Swaziland will have considerably improved its standing among the countries of the world in terms of measurable indices of human development.

Underlying this vision is the focus on the quality of life for individuals in the country. The critical dimensions of the quality of life as reflected here are poverty alleviation, population growth, environmental protection, gender equity (giving emphasis on equality and empowerment of women, where women have been disadvantaged), as well as social integration.

The mission statement of His Majesty's Government further affirms this commitment, which is as follows:

“The mission of the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland is to provide a climate and infrastructure that will progressively maximise the quality and security of life for the people of Swaziland and make the best use of the country's natural and human resources”.

Achievements

Swaziland has established a National Population Council (NPC) and a Secretariat through a gazette. Currently the NPC is developing the National Population Policy. This exercise is undertaken through a fully participatory and consultative approach involving civil society, NGOs, the private sector, parliamentarians, traditional leaders and government.

A gender office has already been established in the Ministry of Home Affairs and gender issues have been mainstreamed in the major government

policy and programme documents. Gender issues are being progressively integrated into the process of development planning.

On sexual and reproductive health and rights the programme has been reviewed in line with the ICPD POA to offer comprehensive integrative services. Reproductive health services are participatory pragmatic and public health based. It also addresses the new challenges of STDs/HIV/AIDS for men women and adolescents including special groups such as people with disabilities and refugees.

Reproductive health is considered a basic human right and it is promoted through IEC.

Government sees NGOs as equal partners in development and in improving the quality and life and welfare of the population. An example of government's interest in seeing the objectives of NGOs achieved, and ensuring a harmonious working relationship is the inclusion of NGOs in institutions and programmes geared towards effecting the ICPD's POA such as the National Population Council, National Development Strategy and Economic and Social Reform Agenda. They are also fully involved in the implementation and assessment of policies and plans of the ICPD POA.

Although no separate co-ordinating group or body has been set up by NGOs to specifically advocate and or implement the ICPD POA the already existing body the co-ordinating assembly of non-government organisations (CANGO) ensures that all sectoral NGOs adhere to the spirit and letter of the POA.

Assistance from UN agencies in particular UNFPA in advocating, assisting and financing the implementation of the goals of the ICPD POA has been invaluable. Other partners that have made major contributions include NGOs, donor communities, the private sector, local government, traditional leaders and others.

Despite these significant achievements outlined we are faced with the following constraints:

- (a) Inadequate financial and human resources to implement the ICPD POA particularly in the areas of advocacy, awareness creation, service provision, shortage of commodities particularly for sexual and reproductive health care.
- (b) Lack of reliable adequate data in support of the programme.
- (c) Socio-cultural constraints, which need to be, overcome through extensive IEC and advocacy efforts.

Challenges

1. Implementation of ICPD POA.
2. Implementation of the poverty alleviation reduction strategy, which to a large extent embraces the ICPD's POA.

3. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is no longer a health sector issue but of national priority. The socio-economic impact of this disease particularly in the increasing number of orphans and children headed households needs immediate attention.

Conclusion

Mr. President having stated the above achievements we will request the international community to assist us in addressing the above constraints and challenges in particular:

- Effective implementation of the ICPD POA through continued provision of financial and technical assistance.
- Strengthening implementation and research capability;
- Improvement in the data base and information technology;
- Assistance to implement the poverty reduction strategy.

I thank you!