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**REPORT OF THE 8TH SESSION OF THE
AFRICA POPULATION COMMISSION
15-16 SEPTEMBER 2011**

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**EIGHTH SESSION OF AFRICAN POPULATION COMMISSION (APC)
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
15-16 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**Report of the 8th Session of the Africa Population
Commission
15-16 September 2011**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 8th Session of the Africa Population Commission (APC) was held at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 15 to 16 September 2011. The agenda items included consideration of the Chairperson's report, the 2010 State of Africa Population Report, the ICPD@20 draft plan of action, the development of Africa's common position on ICPD@20 and consideration of the work of the Africa Population Commission. The participants of the meeting included 19 Member States, namely; Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote- d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Guinea, Republic of Saharawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Chad, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. Other participants were the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the Partners in Population Development (PPD) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

II. OPENING

2. The 8th Session of the Africa Population Commission (APC) was officially opened by the Commissioner for Social Affairs, Advocate Bience Gawanas, who challenged the meeting to come up with viable outcomes as other sectors depend on population for development. Prior to the Commissioner's official opening, the participants were welcomed by the Director of Social Affairs, Ambassador Olawale Maiyegun. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Partnership for Population in Development (PPD) made remarks on behalf of the United Nations and Civil Society Organizations, respectively. Both the UNFPA and PPD pledged their commitment to strengthening the APC. Following all these remarks, The Republic of Togo gave a vote of thanks on behalf of all AU Member States.

III. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

3. The agenda and programme of work were adopted with minor amendments.
4. The 8th Session of the APC elected its bureau, to replace the bureau of the 7th Session and it is composed of the following:
- The Chairperson –The Republic of Togo (representing West Africa)
 - The 1st Vice Chairperson-The Republic of Uganda(representing East Africa)
 - The 2nd t Vice Chairperson-The Republic of Zambia(representing Southern Africa)
 - The 3rd Vice Chairperson-The Republic of Chad(representing Central Africa)
 - Rapporteur-The Republic of Egypt(representing North Africa)

IV. THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

5. The African Union Commission presented the Chairperson's report in which they recalled the 7th Session of the Conference of the African Population Commission (APC) that was held on 22nd October 2009, as part of the 15-Year Review of the Plan of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+15). It was reported that the 7th Session of the APC did not achieve much success. It was reported that during the period 2009-11, the bureau of the APC hardly met. The report recommended that there was a need to share the lessons learnt in order to avoid such pitfalls in future.

6. The APC deliberated on the challenges from the presentation and called on the AUC to investigate in detail the operational issues being faced by the APC and its bureau, rendering the whole institution inactive. The meeting stated that the bureaus of the APC needed to be supported if they were to be productive.

V. THE 2010 STATE OF AFRICA POPULATION REPORT

7. The African Union Commission Presented the State of the 2010 African Population Report under the theme; "Women, Peace, Security and Recovery in Africa". It was reported that Africa bear the world's highest population growth rates; youth population; number of people living in absolute poverty. This is compounded by a combination of peace, security and public health issues that challenge the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It was further reported that current levels of refugees and internally displaced persons further make access to basic services difficult with women and children worst affected.

8. The report estimated Africa's 2010 population to be 1.03 billion with a projection of a two fold increase to 2 billion in the next 40 years. It further stated that 15% of total world population and 18% of population of less developed areas. The share of global population was predicted to increase to 22% by mid-point of the century (2050). The recommendations of the 2010 State of Africa Population report included the following:

- Recognize and address grave violations of girls' and women's human rights.
- Redouble efforts to implement international and regional instruments that protect women and children in armed conflict.
- Put in place National Plans of Action – with appropriate financing – to address the implementation of these and other instruments.
- Ensure the empowerment of women as peace-builders, peacemakers and peacekeepers.

9. Following the presentation, the APC deliberated and recommended that expertise in conducting population research should be drawn from the APC and that information systems needed to be improved including establishment of a dynamic website.

VI. OPERATIONAL REVIEW AND DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR THE ICPD@20

10. The UNFPA presented the approach towards the ICPD beyond 2014. The meeting was informed that this process included a series of interrelated activities such as the Global survey (results to strengthen monitoring framework with improved indicator and baseline), in-depth studies, thematic group reports and National and regional consultations.

11. The UNFPA informed the meeting that the objectives include: identifying barriers and success factors in implementation stimulate multi-stakeholders/sectoral dialogue at country level in an effort to identify opportunities to fast track what is lagging behind, renewing commitment to the Cairo agenda and strengthen and broaden partnerships around ICPD issues.

12. The presentation recalled the proposed approach for Africa on the ICPD operational review as agreed in the consultation meeting held on 14-15 July 2011 in Johannesburg. The approach includes adopting the methodology of the global survey instrument, carrying out the in-depth-studies for selected countries and sub-region as appropriate, preparing the thematic group reports based on national and sub-regional consultation on the priority theme to be considered and hold experts regional meetings to ensure broader consultation and participation in the process.

Road map for the ICPD Review	
Action	Timeline
Consultative meetings	August to December 2011
Finalization of preparatory plan	2nd week December 2011
Supplement to the global survey	15 January 2012
Dissemination of survey questionnaire with guidance note	March 2012
Country Implementation of ICPD review will commence	March 2012
Selection of topic and countries for the in-depth studies and outsourcing them	End February 2012
Completion of data collection and analysis	January 2013
Decision on optional module and follow-up action	End February 2013

Road map for the ICPD Review	
Action	Timeline
Completion of Analysis of survey response	January/February 2013
Finalization of inter-related activities (survey in-depth and country reports)	March 2013
Sub-regional consultation meetings	June 2013
Decision on optional module and follow-up action	End February 2013
APC and Ministerial meeting	September 2013
Fine-tuning reports and submitting to UNFPA for inclusion in the global report	October 2013

13. Following the presentation, the APC deliberated and recommended that the ICPD@20 and post MDGs plans of action should include strengthening of accountability systems, cooperation and integration.

VII. ROADMAP TO AFRICA'S COMMON POSITION ON ICPD@20

14. The African Union Commission made a presentation to guide a discussion on collaboration on the ICPS@20, with a view to develop a common position for Africa. The presenter informed the meeting that a consultative process be undertaken that involves the broad range of continental stakeholders to the fullest extent possible and that the process of the ICPD@20 operation review consultations should be explored and empowered to aggregate stakeholder for post 2015. The APC was advised to articulate and provide continental leadership to the process including at regional and national levels to culminate in the adoption and presentation of the African Common Position on ICPD@20 and subsequently, the APC Bureau working with the AUC and partners can develop draft document. The rest of the process could include circulation of draft document by APC bureau to members, consultation within Member states & regions, consolidation of inputs by APC Bureau with support of AUC and partners, review & adoption by Ministerial meeting (preceded by APC meeting) and transmission through appropriate channels to the 69th session of the GA.

15. The presentation identified some key facilitating and inhibiting factors to delivering on the targets of ICPD PoA to include;

- Availability of resources.
- Political commitment.
- Policy and institutional reforms.
- Programme implementation and management

16. Key recommendations which were presented, discussed and endorsed by the APC include;

- Strengthen accountability systems.
- Ensure integration of population dynamics into development planning.
- Enhance international/regional solidarity and cooperation

VIII. CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK OF THE APC

17. During the presentation of the previous work of the APC, the meeting heard that the APC has been facing some challenges. The APC has not been very active, and most of the functions outlined in its mandate are not being carried out. It was reported that during the period 2009-11, like most of the past bureaux, the APC bureau did not undertake a lot of activities. Although lack of financial resources is a general problem in most organizations, it cannot be solely attributed to in this case as there have been activities that are funded, but APC Members do not undertake them.

18. The challenges presented and discussed included the insufficient activity of the APC and its bureau between the ordinary sessions of the Commission, inadequate financial resources and poor communication between Member States and the AUC. The recommendations presented and discussed by the APC included highlighting population at national and regional levels and secure financial resources, keeping the bureau active during their term of office with a viable action plan, reducing duplication of the work of the APC by urging other players to streamline their work into APC. The meeting further recommended that there is a need to learn more lessons and document more lessons from all stakeholders (Member States, AUC, UNFPA, UNECA, CSOs) of the APC on why participation has reduced. The meeting also urged that previous decisions passed that have been passed on APC need to be documented and implemented.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

i. 2010 State of Africa Population Report:

- The population and development challenges on the continent are well known to the experts and partners in the field the challenge has remained the inability to secure adequate political will and commitment to addressing the challenges. Distinct strategies need to be articulated to advocate, motivate and sustain the necessary political within Member states and at the continental level.

- There is need to strengthen civil registration on the continent in order to have a functional database that would guide decision making both at the level of the Member states and continental level.
- African countries could be grouped based on population characteristics and classified into population zones for purposes of analyzing and reporting on population and development situation, as these zones may not be synonymous with the current (reporting format based) on geographical/political zones.

ii. ICPD@20 Plan of Action

- Communication amongst all stakeholders must be functional and strengthened to facilitate active participation and contribution of all stakeholders especially Member States to the overall process of the ICPD@20 operational review. The proposed ICPD@20 web based portal should therefore be made available to provide inputs throughout the entire process including reviewing draft reports.
- All tools and documents related to the ICPD@20 operational review should be made available in all the four working languages of the African Union in good time as well as ensuring that there is coherence between the contents in all four languages.
- The bureau of the APC should work with the AUC and UNFPA to coordinate the inputs of the APC (and relevant technical expertise in Member states) into the development of the indicators/instruments and the entire process as a whole.
- A meeting of Ministers in Charge of Population should be appropriately involved in the ICPD@20 review process.

iii. Roadmap to Africa's Common Position on ICPD@20

- Integrate population factors into development planning through institutional capacity building at national and sub-national level.
- Advocate the need to allocate adequate resources for population and development issues especially as they affect overall quality of life.
- Institute mechanisms for information and experience sharing as well as knowledge management with a view to have a modern population information system at the continental level exploring the benefits of information technology.
- The APC through its bureau to engage actively with the Regional Economic Communities in articulating the common position.
- Establish and strengthen accountability systems at continental and national levels

iv. Consideration of the work of the APC

- The APC bureau with the support of the AUC and other partners should articulate a strategic plan (incorporating an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system) for the APC (2012 – 2015), taking due cognizance of work plan developed during the 7th session of the APC.
- A communication strategy should be developed to facilitate effective communication amongst all stakeholders; APC Bureau, APC Members, AUC, RECs and Development partners. This should also take full advantage of information technology including a database of APC members and a website.
- Member States with comparative advantage/capacity in certain population and development domains can be identified to support the capacity building and south to south cooperation amongst APC Members and partners.
- Resource mobilization should be undertaken to support population and development initiatives at the national, sub-regional and continental levels, with due attention to domestic resources. Therefore efforts should be geared towards convening and securing the commitment of Ministers in Charge of Population.

19. A coordination mechanism, which takes into consideration the need to preserve institutional memory, should be established that supports the APC bureau and ensures appropriate linkages between the APC Members, AUC, UN and relevant networks of persons working in population and development.

X. CLOSING

20. After deliberations, the meeting was closed on 16 September 2011 at 19:00hrs. In closing, the AUC Head of Division for Health, Population and Nutrition, Dr. Ademola Olajide, thanked all the participants for their fruitful deliberations and assured them that the AUC was committed to strengthen the APC and address population issues in Africa. The AUC and the bureau agreed to work jointly and actively on population issues before the 9th Session of the APC whose date and venue shall be set in due course.

2012

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