

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

A High Level International Consultative Conference Leading up to ICPD30

9-10 October, 2023 | Elephant Hills Resort, 328 Park Way | Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

## Victoria Falls Declaration

We, the Ministers and representatives of the governments of the member countries of Partners in Population and Development (PPD), and PPD non-member countries, representatives of UN agencies including United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and international organizations, representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the academia, gathered in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from 9th to 10th October 2023, for the 20th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in Population and Development (IIMC): A High-Level Consultation Leading up to ICPD30, which is jointly organized by PPD, the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, particularly the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, and UNFPA, adopt this declaration.

This International Inter-Ministerial Conference is held at the juncture when the world is approaching the observance of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA), also known as ICPD30, and the 30th anniversary of the founding of PPD that scheduled in 2024. It was also a crucial moment when the world population reached 8 billion, and the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was declared no longer a public health emergency of international concern. However, the world is facing multiple critical catastrophes such as lingering effects of the pandemic, ongoing conflicts, and intensifying climate change, etc. The achievement of the SDGs is in peril.

The Conference is held with the overarching fulfillment of the Nairobi Summit commitments through SSTC, by reviewing the gains and gaps in the progress of commitment implementation, and future strategies and priority actions to be taken to finish the unfinished ICPD Agenda. The delegates reached the agreement to further promote SSTC with high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions to ensure effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hence,

### We, the delegates of the Inter-Ministerial Conference,

1. **Reaffirm** our commitments made at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 in 2019, the UN High-Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation in 2023, the 2023 SDG Summit, and the preceding IIMC meetings on SSTC in population and reproductive health, to achieve the goals of the ICPD and SDGs (the Sustainable Development Goals).
2. **Reaffirm** our commitments to achieve the three zeros: zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices.

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

3. **Reaffirm** the national commitments made by the 173 governments represented in the Nairobi Summit, including 27 PPD member states in the following five areas: universal access to sexual and reproductive health; financial resources to finish the ICPD Program of Action; demographic diversity to drive economic growth and achieve sustainable development; gender-based violence and the harmful practices of child, early and forced marriages including female genital mutilation; and right to sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian and fragile settings.
4. **Reaffirm** our collective commitment to multilateralism, with the aim of promoting international unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation through SSTC for achieving the ICPD and SDGs. We reaffirm the principle of SSC for national sovereignty, national ownership and interdependence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefits.
5. **Note** that the year 2024 is the 30th anniversary of the ICPD, and believe it is a good opportunity to review progress and accelerate the implementation of the ICPD and SDG 2030 Agenda. Welcome the global observance event of the ICPD30 to be held at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) meeting at the UN Headquarters in April 2024, which will be associated with a series of national and regional consultations.
6. **Welcome** also to the upcoming 30th anniversary of the founding of PPD, a unique ministerial-level inter-governmental organization for SSC in population and reproductive health comprised of 27 countries of the Global South, representing more than 60% of the world's population. Acknowledge the significant value and important leading role of PPD that has been playing among Southern Countries in promoting SSTC since its founding in 1994.
7. **Acknowledge** the progress and achievements made by PPD and its member countries for the promotion of SSTC including experience sharing, human resource development, policy dialogue, technology transfers, and innovative project implementation in population and reproductive health ever since the ICPD, which has made significant contributions towards the national development and the improvement of reproductive health, maternal and child health in the PPD member countries, and other developing countries as well.
8. **Acknowledge** particularly the significant value of 20 consecutive annual International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation in Population and Development in the past decades, which have been organized by PPD, in cooperation with its member countries and UNFPA, and has become a well-known global platform for experience sharing and policy dialogue on SSTC in population and reproductive health.
9. **Acknowledge** the achievements made by PPD through SSTC in responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic through knowledge and experience sharing, policy dialogue, personnel training, technology transfers, expert assistance, medical equipment/supply, and vaccine donation. Acknowledge with appreciation the great contribution made by the UNFPA, UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), World Health Organization (WHO), and other UN agencies and international

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

organizations in supporting SSTC for maternal and child health (MCH) and reproductive health in responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. **Acknowledge** the contributions made by Southern institutions including the Centers of Excellence in PPD member countries on promoting SSTC through conducting both long-term and short-term training, experience exchange, scientific research, networking, strategic dialogues and Good Practice development, especially in the midst of the pandemic.
11. **Welcome** the initiatives of convening consecutive annual BRICS Conferences on Population and Development, and the SSC Meetings on Population and Development between PPD member countries and African countries, as these initiatives have enriched SSTC for population and development among the developing countries.
12. **Recognize** that young people played a vital role as frontline responders in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Express concern that young people are among the most seriously affected population groups by the pandemic in many aspects of their lives, and the need for adolescent RH care services has not been sufficiently met, and it was even worsened by the pandemic.
13. **Express concerns** that following the Nairobi Summit, the world has been facing multiple crises and challenges such as ongoing conflicts, climate change, and particularly severe disruption caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and countries are still struggling to recover from its unanticipated negative social and economic impacts. These critical challenges have increased vulnerability and instability of developing countries and caused many uncertainties towards achieving the ICPD and health-related SDGs by 2030.
14. **Realize** that there is more to do to finish the unfinished ICPD Agenda. Unmet need for family planning remains high in developing countries; Every single year, 287,000 women globally lose their lives giving birth, and in some places, maternal mortality rates are even increasing; Nearly half of all pregnancies are unintended, and unsafe abortion becomes a leading cause of maternal death; Gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls are still a big challenge.
15. **Realize** that emerging demographic issues need to be addressed in the pursuit of the ICPD and the SDG 2030 Agenda. We are living in a period of extreme demographic diversity. Two-thirds of people in the world now live in a place with below-replacement fertility. Rapid fertility decline and population aging have become concerns of many countries. Also note that debates on future strategies and priorities of the world population movement have been generated while the world population reached 8 billion.
16. **Recognize** the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of SSC in population and development; also recognize the need to establish an assessment mechanism of SSC impact both at national and international level with a view to improving, as appropriate, its quality in a results-oriented manner, and the need to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency and accountability of the PPD Secretariat, a focal point for promoting and facilitating SSTC of PPD alliance.

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

17. **Recognize** the particular importance to further leveraging resource mobilization for SSC in population and reproductive health for achieving ICPD and the SDGs. Recognize the need to have innovative resource mobilization for SSTC in the changed global situation. Recognize the potential value and opportunities of the UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, and similar establishments for SSC at the national level in PPD member states.
18. **Recognize** the need to further strengthen comparative studies, research, networking, and documentation on SSC in population and reproductive health in Southern institutions of PPD member states including the Centers of Excellence for SSC in population and development.
19. **Acknowledge** with appreciation the important role of UN agencies and international organizations specially UNFPA, as the lead UN agency for sexual and reproductive health, the consistent and invaluable contributions they have made for the advancement of SSTC in sexual and reproductive health. Recognize the value of triangular cooperation and multiple partnership for promoting SSC.

**We, the delegates of this Inter-Ministerial Conference, declare our clarion call and commit ourselves to take the following actions,**

20. **Make full efforts** to shape the future agenda for the ICPD through active participation in the review of implementation of the ICPD at the juncture of the 30th anniversary of ICPD Programme of Action and also 30th anniversary of the founding of PPD, for the purpose of assessing the gains and gaps, determining which approach works well and which does not, and formulating future strategies for the remaining years to achieve the ICPD by 2030, bearing in mind the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit held at UN Headquarters in September 2023, also bearing in mind the potential opportunities and global crises and challenges we are facing. Encourage PPD and its member states to integrate these review process with the mapping of the PPD Strategic Plan for SSC (2025-2029).
21. **Escalate** the concerted efforts of the Nairobi Summit commitments on ICPD25 to translate them into national actions for finishing the unfinished agenda, and take further concrete actions to fulfill these commitments by 2030 - with specific emphasis on achieving the “three zeros” for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning to reduce unintended pregnancy, especially among adolescents; reducing maternal mortality, particularly in fragile and humanitarian emergency settings; preventing gender-based violence and the harmful practices, in the dimensions of law and policy enforcement, programme implementation, advocacy, community participation and social supervision, bearing in mind that the pandemic and multiple crises in the world have resulted in the roll-back of progress on reproductive health and women's rights in many countries. Accelerate meaningful youth engagement in all decisions that affect their health and well-being, so that they may achieve their full human potential, as critical agents of change and torchbearers of the 2030 Agenda for current and future generations.
22. **Emphasize** addressing demographic diversity to drive economic growth and achieve

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

sustainable development. Inspire PPD member countries to take concrete actions to build family-friendly and people-centered societies, particularly in countries where fertility is falling and the population is aging, by providing needed health care services, nursery facilities, community support, tax reform, and social security schemes to increase people's well-being and promote family development of the country.

23. **Increase** domestic financing by exploring new, participatory, and innovative financing instruments and structures to meet the challenges that threaten to derail progress and sideline the centrality of reproductive health and population in national development to ensure affordable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs.
24. **Encourage** PPD Member States to make long-term and predictable funding to PPD for more effective and sustainable development of SSTC. Multiple resource mobilization for SSTC including third-party cost-sharing, parallel financing, and in-kind contribution which have been proven to be feasible and effective in the past decades among the PPD member countries. Encourage PPD and its member countries to innovate approaches and adopt strategies of resource mobilization for SSTC in this changed and new world situation, and increase advocacy effectiveness by advocating right persons with right approaches.
25. **Strengthen** PPD both institution as well as its operations, bearing in mind the respective mandates and comparative advantages of different stakeholders, and also bearing in mind the potential opportunities and global multiple crises and challenges we are facing, so as to increase the resilience and ensure sustainable development of SSC. Immediate priorities should be given to integrating SSC of population and reproductive health into the overall national SSC program; establishing and developing a national task force as an entry point toward the institutionalization; allocating a regular annual budget; building and strengthening the Centers of Excellence on SSC.
26. **Promote** innovations for enhancing and expanding SSTC. Give more special emphasis on new technology transfer including digital technology transfer through SSTC. Encourage particularly the innovative MCH cooperation initiatives between and among the PPD member countries, such as the establishment of matching hospitals (sister hospitals) by taking advantage of digital technologies, implementation of integrated MCH cooperation initiatives by building multiple partnerships with different stakeholders, etc. Call upon the international community to give particular attention and more support to the MCH/RH improvement in the west and central Africa regions through SSTC.
27. **Facilitate** member states to advocate ICPD agenda in the Summit of the Future preparation and its outcomes. Strengthen research and monitoring of SSC. Encourage and support establishment and development of SSC Centers of Excellence. Encourage PPD and relevant UN agencies and international organizations to provide more support to SSC Centers of Excellence including professional guidance development, capacity building, resource mobilization, and good practice sharing. Conduct, on a regular and voluntary basis, and in combination with the review process

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development

of ICPD30, monitoring and assessment of the progress of SSC and its contributions made by PPD and its member states toward the achievement and determination of ICPD and SDGs.

28. **Establish** a mechanism for institutionalizing SSTC in order to facilitate and exchange expertise and experiences. Reinforce multiple partnership building for SSTC, including engaging with partners in the UN system, the international community, government, civil society, academia, and the private sector by seeking a good opportunity of rising SSTC movement in the international community in the new era, and particularly strengthen the triangular cooperation for more impactful and sustainable actions at global, regional and country levels so as to achieve the ICPD and SDGs and to build a global community of health for all, in which no one should be left behind.
29. We express our great gratitude and appreciation to the H.E. Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, His Excellency President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for attendance and inspiring speech for this conference. We convey our sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the people and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, specially for the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare for successfully hosting this IIMC and the warm hospitality extended to all delegates in the beautiful city of Victoria Fall.

\*\*\*