



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations

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Media statement

For Immediate Release

**Southern Africa envoys advocate improvement of health care infrastructure**

**UNITED NATIONS, New York, Friday, June 21, 2013** – Southern African envoys to the United Nations have proposed that quality health care delivery should remain central to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) currently being formulated by UN Member States.

Zambia, speaking on behalf of the southern African group at the fourth meeting of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) at UN Headquarters, said health was central to all the three dimensions of sustainable development.

“The SDG on health should go beyond the MDG and focus on quality of health care for all with increased technological transfer and implementation,” said Dr Mwaba Kasese-Bota, Zambia’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, in a statement read for by counsellor (economic) Theresah Chanda.

Dr Kasese-Bota emphasised the need to improve infrastructure and standards of health service delivery.

The Zambian Ambassador said one of the main challenges that Zambia and the Southern African region had was achieving the demographic dividend.

The demographic dividend is the accelerated economic growth that results from a decline in a country's mortality and fertility and the subsequent change in the age structure of the population.

She said large, healthy and skilled population increases productivity.

“Our region believes that sustainable development will only be attained if the nations know their population to allow effective planning and meaningfully implement development,” Dr Kasese-Bota said. “A well-planned population increase would have a positive impact on productivity,

economic gains resulting in turn to more money going to health services and ultimately a decline in mortality.”

She said Africa had made progress with all health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but the reductions in infant mortality were “not enough” to reach the 2015 target.

According to the *Zambian Ambassador*, communicable and non-communicable diseases continue to be major disease burdens in Africa, with HIV and AIDS, Malaria and tuberculosis continuing being among the leading killers.

Dr Kasese-Bota said there was need to have the targets for communicable and non-communicable diseases to give focus to access, improving the determinants of good health and key interventions.

“Maternal and Under Five rates continue to be the best indicators of health system performances. Our take is that they should still be part of the SDGs and be given more prominence,” said Dr Kasese-Bota.

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*Issued by:*

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#### **Editors' Notes**

- Zambia and Zimbabwe are representing southern Africa on the UN Open Working Group, which is formulating SDGs that will succeed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015.
- Sustainable Development is a mode of human development in which the use of resources and the environment meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.