



94-08-22: New approach set

"ICPD 94"

International Conference on Population and Development

Cairo, Egypt

5-13 September 1994

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PRESS RELEASE

22 August 1994

CAIRO CONFERENCE EXPECTED TO ENDORSE A NEW APPROACH LINKING
POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Delegates from 180 Countries to Negotiate 20-year Programme of
Action

A new approach to the some of the most urgent issues facing
humanity has emerged from preparations for the International
Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which opens in
Egypt on 5 September.

Several years of effort by Governments, international organizations and non-governmental groups have gone into drafting the 20-year Programme of Action which is to be finalized in intergovernmental negotiations at the Cairo International Conference Centre from 5-13 September. A central theme is that efforts to slow population growth, reduce poverty, achieve sustainable development and protect the environment are mutually reinforcing.

In striving for progress in all these areas, the Conference will emphasize the need to empower women -- to improve their status, health, education and employment prospects -- and to guarantee choice in regard to family planning. The draft Programme of Action's stress on providing family planning as part of a broader effort to meet overall reproductive health care needs, particularly of women, is a significant shift in emphasis from the two international population conferences in 1974 and 1984.

This approach and its formulation are summarized in the August issue of "ICPD 94", the Conference newsletter. The newsletter (No. 18) also includes reports on:

- + Recent statements from a number of donor countries pledging increased support for population-related programmes.

- + Informal consultations on the ICPD draft Programme of Action, held at UN Headquarters on 13-15 July.

+ A 19-29 July ICPD preparatory meeting in Budapest, involving representatives from the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

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"ICPD 94" reports that Heads of State or Government will lead several of the more than 180 national delegations expected to participate in the Conference. They include President Soeharto of Indonesia, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller of Turkey, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, Prime Minister Maxime Carlot Korman of Vanuatu and Prime Minister Kaamuta Laatasi of Tuvalu.

Among the other dignitaries expected are Queen Noor Al Hussein of Jordan, Vice President Al Gore of the United States, and the heads of most United Nations organizations and programmes.

The ICPD draft Programme of Action is "focused not on demographic targets, but on seriously addressing the health and education needs of individuals, especially of girls and women," according to Dr. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference.

The newsletter describes the process in which the draft Programme was produced, involving input from the UN General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, intergovernmental negotiations at three sessions of the ICPD Preparatory Committee, and numerous regional conferences, expert group meetings and

round tables.

Delegates from over 170 countries at the Committee's third session (PrepCom III) in April 1994 agreed on well over 90 per cent of the wording of the last 14 chapters of the draft Programme of Action. The first two chapters (Preamble and Principles) in their entirety remain subject to further negotiation in Cairo.

In addition to Chapters 1 and 2, final negotiation of the Programme of Action is expected to focus on three groups of unresolved issues. The first is a set of proposed 20-year goals in three mutually reinforcing areas (reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality; universal primary education, especially for girls; and universal access to family planning information and services).

Second are estimates of financial resources required in developing countries to provide reproductive health services including family planning, prevent sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and meet population data, policy and research needs.

Third are definitional issues. Several important terms, including "reproductive rights", "reproductive health", "safe motherhood", "fertility regulation" and "family planning" were repeatedly placed within brackets in the draft Programme of Action because there was not unanimity at PrepCom III on what they include or imply. Underlying differences concern proposals to deal with unsafe abortion as a major health concern, and with

adolescents' needs for access to reproductive health information and services including family planning.

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Copies of "ICPD 94" are available in English, French and Spanish from the ICPD Secretariat, 220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, USA; tel: (212) 297-5244 or 5245; fax: (212) 297-5250. The newsletter is also in electronic form on several computer networks (for information, send e-mail to: ryanw@unfpa.org).

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