



## 94-09-06: Statement by OECD, Mr. Makoto Taniguchi

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Speech by Mr. Makoto TANIGUCHI

Deputy Secretary-General,

OECD on 6th September 1994

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Mr. President, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am greatly honoured to speak on behalf of the Organization for  
Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on issues of utmost  
importance to this Planet and its burgeoning billions of inhabitants. My  
sincere thanks go to the Government of Egypt and to the United Nations  
who have made it possible for the world community to meet in this  
country, one of the cradles of civilization, and discuss this critically  
important global issue. Our beautiful host city Cairo offers a good  
example of the many broad, complex and interlinked challenges that face

humankind today and that will grow even more awesome as rapidly increasing numbers of people will seek to build a reasonably decent life for themselves and their children.

#### The Bucharest and Mexico City Conferences

2. The timing of the Cairo Conference seems most appropriate. Twenty years have passed since the world's governments met in Bucharest in 1974 and adopted the first politically negotiated World Population Plan of Action. This Plan of

Action has proved useful, constituting a broad-based consensus on the interlinkages between demographic factors and social and economic development. The World Conference in Mexico City in 1984 provided an excellent opportunity to update the Bucharest Plan of Action.

3. Although we have to admit that there have been serious limitations on the United Nations population activities due to their delicate political nature, the United Nations has played a significant role, through these major conferences, in focusing public attention on this important global issue. In particular, the UNFPA has made a steady, serious effort in enabling implementation of these Plans of Action.

#### People and resources -- complex relationships

5. Nevertheless, the reality is that while the global rate of population growth has been declining during the past 25 years, the increase in absolute numbers is at unprecedented levels. World population, which was about 2.2 billion in 1950, reached 5 billion in 1987, thus doubling in the space of 37 years. In 1994 alone, world

population will grow by a record 93 million, to over 5.7 billion people. Over 950 million human beings will be added in this decade, nearly all in the developing countries. Although much attention focuses on the high population growth of Africa, the adverse effects in absolute terms can be just as serious in the already large population countries in Asia. Even low rates of population increase in these countries, can have a larger impact on their already-strained environments.

6. The full social and economic implications of these figures are simply astounding, and, I fear, not possible to fully grasp. Behind these dry demographic statistics there are millions of daily, individual dramas taking place in a world with endemic poverty and disease, complex trade relations, unsettled debt issues, and a largely deteriorating environment. Water shortages are on the increase, fish stocks being depleted.

#### Challenges and achievements

7. The Draft Programme of Action before us goes a long way in setting out the complexities as well as the seriousness of the situation. Building on the consensus arrived at in the Rio Conference in 1992, interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development are well presented. The Draft underscores the key conclusion of 58 of the World's Scientific Academies at the "Science summit" in New Delhi in 1993, when it said: "Humanity is approaching a crisis point with respect to the interlocking issues of population, environment, and development".

8. But the Draft Programme of Action is also able to report encouraging achievements in national and international efforts to lower mortality, morbidity and fertility rates; in increasing literacy; in involving

people at all levels in the development process; in paying fuller attention to women's crucial role in development, not least in fertility decisions; in growing South-South learning and collaboration.

9. Whereas it is true that most, if not all, elements of development are closely interlinked and that causes and effects are not always clear, it seems essential to build on demonstrated successes and not to turn the complexities into alibis for inaction. The increasing divergences of developing country situations should always be carefully noted and development 'models' treated with caution so as to avoid inflexibility and technocratic straight-jackets. But it seems equally important to avoid the 'paralysis through analysis' syndrome, when urgent action is needed and an international track record for successful action has been clearly established.

## II. THE OECD AND DAC RESPONSE

10. The OECD is a unique forum permitting governments of the industrialized democracies to exchange policy experiences, and study and formulate the best policies possible in all economic and social spheres, including most, if not all, of the issues on our agenda. Among the issues that OECD is addressing in the 1990s are employment, economic growth, trade, investment, environment, competition policy, migration, urban development, education and training, science and technological policy, energy and development co-operation. This co-operation is carried out directly by the 25 Member governments in the framework of committees composed of senior national civil servants.

Population Policy and Family Planning

11. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the principal body through which the OECD deals with issues related to co-operation for development.

12. In more than thirty years of experience and growth, the DAC has acquired a very firm grasp of the full complexities of successful development strategies. This has not discouraged the DAC and its Members from tackling the population issues in a direct and specific way. Quite the contrary! "Slowing population growth in those many countries where it is too high to permit sustainable development" was identified as one of the basic priorities for development co-operation in the 1990s, by the DAC High-Level (Ministerial) Meeting in 1989. A subsequent Ministerial Meeting highlighted the following specific operational implications for aid agencies:

-- Population matters should play a much more prominent role in the bilateral and multilateral policy dialogue with developing countries.

-- Developing country governments and institutions need assistance in building the necessary administrative and managerial capacity to plan and implement effective population policies and programmes.

-- Funding should be increased for voluntary quality family planning programmes, which have effectively demonstrated their potential for promoting individual health and well-being and for reducing birth rates; contraceptive practice has increased nearly five-fold in the last few decades and several hundred million unwanted births have been averted. Still, there remains a vast unmet need as well as demand for family planning services.

-- Greater attention must be given to strengthening the educational,

social and economic status of women.

-- Special consideration should be given to the demographic impact of broader development programmes, in particular in education and primary health care.

-- Stronger efforts should be made to achieve more coherent and better coordinated aid in the population field under the leadership of the recipient government and through closer co-operation between all parties involved, including international organizations and NGOs.

-- Last, but not least, the UNFPA and other international institutions are encouraged to assist developing countries to put forward population programme proposals, since several DAC Members prepared to provide support in this field get no requests for such co-operation.

The DAC will meet in November this year to discuss donor roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

#### Migration and development

13. Let me now turn briefly to the complex issue of migration and development, which is well discussed in the Draft Plan of Action. The large majority of migratory movements takes place within and between developing countries, and migratory flows to OECD Member countries are also significant and increasing. OECD Members have taken a strong interest in the subject of migration itself and its linkages to development. In 1993 the Ministerial Council of OECD requested the Organization to analyze migration trends and policies in the context of international co-operation, not least with the objective of making

migration beneficial for both sending and receiving countries. 14. Mr. President, in view of the complex and mostly indirect relationships between economic and social development and migration, OECD Members' continuing and improving efforts in support of developing countries will focus on promoting sustainable and equitable growth which offers a long-term prospect of sustainable and beneficial migration patterns. This strategy includes enabling broader participation of all the people in the development process and the sharing of its benefits (including employment), and ensuring environmental sustainability. Major efforts will also have to be made to prevent a further marginalization of the least developed countries.

15. In this respect, consistency across OECD countries' policies will assume a central importance. In particular, coherence between trade, agricultural, industrial and financial policies will be essential for promoting growth and sustained job creation in developing countries. Improved access to OECD markets will be of critical importance for the many developing countries which have implemented far-reaching economic reforms in order to participate fully in the world economy and share in the benefits of an open trading system. OECD countries have a special responsibility to pursue their efforts towards continued trade liberalization and improved access to their markets.

16. Aid has the potential of acting as an important catalyst in this process. It is, however, only one of the many elements of a coherent development co-operation policy, aimed at improving development prospects in developing countries and thus contributing to reduce migration pressures in the long run. Developing countries must adopt policies aimed at improving their human resources and the eliminate for private enterprise to create jobs and enable the whole population to benefit from the fruits of economic growth. This should be accompanied

by continued efforts to increase participation in the political process, to improve governance and to ensure respect for human rights and democracy.

#### Sustainable development

17. Closely linked to many of the priority concerns of this Conference is sustainable development. OECD is committed to play an active role in this field. Many areas of OECD work are intimately connected with key issues of sustainable development: economic instruments, trade and environment, aid, energy, agriculture and production and consumption patterns, just to mention a few. In addition, OECD's statistical work provides an important source of data on sustainable development. In order to make available this OECD knowledge and expertise in a systematic fashion and to feed, as requested, into the work of the Sustainable Development Commission, the OECD works closely with the Commission.

18. Water is essential for life as well as for a wide range of economic and informal sector activities, many of which are undertaken by women. It is vital for health, agriculture, industry and hydropower. Water is also a vital part of the environment and is home to many forms of life on which human well-being ultimately depends.

19. Demographic pressures, over-exploitation of groundwater and pollution increase stress on the quantity and quality of water. These pressures add to the risk that acute water scarcity, water-borne diseases and conflicts between riparian neighbours over finite water resources will come to represent major security threats.



20. A recent DAC meeting on Water Resources Management concluded that it is the urgent and critical responsibility of DAC Members, individually and collectively, to mobilize the necessary political support in order to implement water resources management at all levels. The DAC encourages and wishes to follow dialogue with developing countries concerning sound water resources management. National experiences, South/South collaboration, twinning arrangements and effectiveness of development co-operation are key areas of interest.

#### Empowering Women

21. Mr. President, Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment is one of the central themes of the Draft Programme of Action. The OECD welcomes giving these crucial issues priority. Failing to address them leads to waste of resources, time, effort and enormous development potential. In order to prevent this occurrence, women's issues of the OECD Member countries are addressed through the Working Party on Women in the Economy. Central issues addressed by the Working Party include: the relationship between structural adjustment and the integration of women in OECD economies in the 1990s; identification of directions for action related to family and employment; women and structural change.

22. Issues central to women of the developing world are addressed by the DAC's Expert Group on Women in Development. Since 1984, the Group has actively contributed to bringing women and gender issues to the forefront of Member aid agency policy and practice. The Group contributes gender perspectives to the work of the DAC in areas such as participatory development and good governance, basic education, environment, aid reviews, population policy and family planning, urban issues, and programme assistance.

23. The OECD, through these two bodies, is actively contributing to the preparations leading up to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality Development and Peace, to be held in Beijing, in 1995.

#### Urban development

24. Cities all over the world face major challenges as a result of population increase and rural-urban migration. But urbanization is also an intrinsic dimension of economic and social development, offering opportunity both at the micro and macro levels. Some 15 years ago the OECD Council established a Group on Urban Affairs, considering that urban issues and quality of life in cities were urgent concerns. The functioning of cities have central implications for national policies, and indeed for development.

25. Present work includes an examination of the relationships between economic, environmental, spatial and social policies in urban areas as a key input into the overall efforts to achieve sustainable development. An assessment is also under way focusing on urban policies and practices to reduce resource consumption and to improve the quality of life. A special project initiated recently deals with 'The Ecological City'. The OECD will hold a high level meeting on Women in the City next month.

26. The DAC has also carried out major work on the role and responsibilities of foreign assistance related to urban development in the developing countries.

OECD will pursue work in this important area and contribute to the preparations for Habitat II (1996) well aware that more than half

mankind will be living in cities in the next few years.

### III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

27. Time does not allow me to mention in any detail OECD's major work in areas such as Employment, (Basic) Education, (Primary) Health Care, Participatory Development and Good Governance, including Human Rights. The OECD Members make major contributions in these key areas through their development assistance programmes. I would, however, like to underscore in particular poverty alleviation and investment in human resources, which constitute two central themes in our development co-operation programme of work. Non-governmental organizations and community groups and their contributions to development figure prominently. The elaboration of a set of DAC Principles for Effective Aid help us to better understand and address strategic population and sustainable development issues.

28. The world community meeting here in Cairo faces challenges of an unprecedented magnitude and complexity. But we have not only added 1 700 million people since we met in Bucharest -- we have also gained valuable and promising experience to guide our future strategic planning. We know now that involving people at all stages of the development process, providing them with knowledge and health care, and fighting poverty will greatly facilitate sustainable development. Providing women and men with safe, accessible and affordable means to practice voluntary family planning -- an internationally recognized human right since the 1960s -- forms an essential and integral part of a new participatory development agenda.

29. The crucial issue of population, along with environment, which are critical for human life, should be at the centre of the United Nations

development work. On these issues, there should be no differences between developed and developing countries. As underlined in the DAC Chairman's report of 1989, population, environment and poverty are closely linked in the least developed countries. But the lesson of my personal experience in the United Nations is that it has been politically difficult and sensitive to tackle the population issue squarely. Plans of Action have been impressive but implementation has often proved difficult and results have been uneven.

30. In conclusion, I believe that the United Nations is the only universal body to deal with this important global issue and, therefore, in my view, population should be moved to the centre of the United Nations' development work together with environment. The OECD is ready to co-operate with the United Nations, together with other international organizations, including non-governmental groups, in the support of national efforts to implement the Cairo Plan of Action.

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