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STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY H.E. Mr. OLIVIU GHERMAN

Chairman of the Senate of Romania,

in the Plenary of ICPD

Cairo, 6 September 1994

Mister President, Mister Secretary General, Madame Secretary General of the ICPD, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me from the outset congratulate you, Mister President, on your unanimous election in the highest office of this Conference and express the satisfaction of our delegation to see in the chair a distinguished representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a friendly country of Romania.

As the personal representative of the President of Romania, H.E. Mr. Ion Iliescu, I have the great privilege to begin by presenting His Excellency's message to the ICPD.

"Message de Son Excellence Monsieur Ion Iliescu, President de la Roumanie, adresse aux participants a la Conference internationale sur la population et le developpement (Le Caire, 5-13 septembre, 1994)

Deux decenies auparavant, se tenait a Bucarest, sous l'egide de l'ONU, la premiere Conference Mondiale Gouvernementale sur la population et le developpement, qui a adopte "Le Plan Mondial d'Action" sur la population, le premier guide de la communaute internationale dans le domaine de l'inter-relation population-developpement. Les principes et les objectives de ce Plan d'Action, qui maintiennent leur actualite, ont ete developpes au cours des annees et seront enrichies par le Programme d'Action qui sera adopte lors de l'actuel Forum International du Caire.

La Conference du Caire a lieu dans le courant de changements politiques, particulierement importants survenus dans le monde depuis la precedente Conference de Mexico, dont l'apparition des nouvelles

democraties dans l'Europe Centrale et de l'Est. Dans ce contexte, je voudrais signaler qu'une des premieres mesures adoptees en Roumanie juste apres la Revolution de Decembre 1989, a ete de mettre fin a la politique que l'ancien regime totalitaire avait poursuivie en matiere de natalite, et par consequence l'abrogation de la legislation restrictive sur l'avortement et la contraception, qui violaient les droits fondamentaux de l'homme et du couple. Un nouveau systeme legislatif a ete adopte, en commençant avec la Constitution de 1991, qui garantit le respect des droits de la famille, de l'enfant et de la jeunesse, ainsi que la protection sociale.

La Conference du Caire est invitee a repondre aux problemes contemporains majeurs, concernant l'interaction entre la population, l'accroissement economique soutenu et le developpement durable, fondees sur le respect des droits et des libertes fondamentales de l'homme. Elle devrait aussi recommander de nouvelles mesures, y compris l'intensification de la cooperation technique et financiere internationale, pour assurer des conditions dignes de bien etre et de travail pour la population du monde entier et toute particulierement une vie heureuse pour les meres et les enfants de notre planete. L'opinion publique internationale suit avec beaucoup d'interet et d'espoir le deroulement de cette Conference et je suis convaincu que tous les participants sont animes par la volonte d'arriver aux meilleurs resultats.

Permettez moi de souhaiter plein succes aux travaux de la Conference internationale du Caire sur la population et le developpement!

Ion Iliescu

President de la Roumanie"

Mister President, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Romanian delegation, I would like to express our high appreciation and thanks to the Egyptian Government for its efforts to provide the suitable conditions for our work and a successful conclusion of the International Conference on Population and Development.

At the same time, we appreciate the efforts made by the distinguished members of the Conference's Preparatory Committee, especially by the Secretary General of the Conference, Ms. Nafis Sadik, for the excellent organization of this major event.

Romania considers that the current draft Programme of Action outlines a consistent body of principles and objectives, along with the means to implement them, entailing the common responsibilities of the states, both to each other and also towards the planetary home of the whole mankind. The draft provides a substantial groundwork for discussions and, once adopted, for the co-operation among all the countries attending the Conference.

We cannot help mentioning the fact that, to a great extent; the concrete possibilities for applying the principles listed out in the draft Programme depend on outside factors to which we are going to refer further on. In our opinion, it is obvious that a sine qua non condition for putting the Programme's provisions into operation, is closely related to the existence of an adequate minimum economic standard.

All programs meant to improve the human condition have to overcome poverty, which is the greatest enemy of any actions aimed to cross the bridge from words to facts. Or, given the present conditions when, unfortunately, the gap between the poor and the rich tends to widen, the danger that the Programme's principles might become empty slogans in the countries facing poverty is real and should not be underestimated.

What I have said above leads to the conclusion that a necessary preliminary step to be taken in order to fulfil the objectives of the Programme is the development of a global strategy to bridge off the discrepancies between the poor and the rich, not only between the countries, but also inside each country. The existence of such a programme is essential for decreasing the migration tendencies as well. These migration movements are detrimental both to the recipient states, generating inequities against the local citizens and stirring up xenophobia, and also to the native countries in view of the fact that the most likely strata to emigrate are the most educated, the native countries being pushed once more towards poverty.

Therefore we consider that, if we really want to solve the population problems, then we must start with the very beginning, namely to convince the rich countries that it, is also in their interest, or better said, in their long-term interest, to find the way to more efficiently pay the tax for self-protection, by putting into practice programs for speeding up the eradication of poverty worldwide. We think that it makes no sense to talk about "their" problems and "our" problems; today, and in the future, all problems are common, and concern all of us equally.

The second aspect I would like to focus on is the family

planning. In this line, the gaps I was referring above find a very negative expression. So, admittedly or not, the family planning is formulated and applied to the wealthy families level and becomes a mere illusion for the poor families. Fortunately, because of the large-scale improvement of living standards, this trend is curbed down, but does not stop to be a problem. We would take the risk to state that each person on Earth should have free access to air, water, education and contraceptives. Adding to these elements a minimum sexual education, we consider that a substantial progress toward a coherent strategy of population policy would be achieved.

Of course, we are for equal rights for men and women, but I wonder whether this magnificent statement does not also depend, inter alia, on guaranteeing the fairest possible share of duties between the two genders. Sometimes, we feel that the thesis on insuring equal rights for men and women is misused for overloading women's duties.

Mister President,

It is well known that five years have almost passed since Romania succeeded, following a far-reaching revolutionary movement, to overthrow dictatorship, which, during its final stage, had become an anachronistic despotism. Because of the aberrant population policy pursued by the former regime, which was targeted to achieve at any price a population growth, we inherited an unfavorable population structure, with a non-negligible layer of the population having low opportunities of employment in the country's productive effort. This layer comes especially from the broken families as a result of a legislation under which the divorce was almost impossible. Even under these circumstances, the results in rebuilding the Romanian society are

satisfactory, due to the qualifications of the active population. But, this fact can not satisfy us entirely, so for the future, we have to strengthen the basic nucleus of the society, which is the family, through economic and educational key factors. This desideratum lies at the heart of all decision-making in Romania.

Mister President,

The Romanian delegation agrees on and backs up all the principles included in the draft Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and militates for putting into practice the measures stipulated by the Programme, according to our country's specific conditions.

It is a pleasant duty to express to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities the high appreciation of the Romanian Government for the technical assistance provided in the field of family planning and for running the 1992 Population and Housing Census. Likewise, we express our gratitude for the assistance received from the European Union through the PHARE Programme, as well as from UNICEF and from the World Bank.

We express our availability and support for the basic issues of the "Agenda for Development" forwarded by the United Nations General Secretary, which foreshadow a new, unitary and interdependent outlook on development, centered on the human being.

We assure you, Mister President, of all our co-operation for the successful conclusion of the Conference.

Thank you for your attention!

For further information, please contact: popin@undp.org
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