



## 94-09-06: Statement of Turkey, H.E. Mrs. Onay Alpago

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AS WRITTEN

SPEECH DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY ONAY ALPAGO,  
MINISTER OF STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY,

RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

6 SEPTEMBER 1994

Mr. Chairman , Distinguished Delegates ,

Ladies and Gentlemen ,

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to be here today in the  
ancient and beautiful land of Egypt. Egypt is a country to which the  
entire human kind acknowledges a debt. At the dawn of history, this

country was one of the first; cradles of civilization. Over thousands of years it has inspired every generation with her wisdom and beauty.

This country is therefore the ideal host for a conference on the future of humanity. I would like to congratulate the Egyptian Government for hosting this Third International Conference on Population and Development. I am delighted that Egypt's leading role has already been recognized by the 1994 UN Population Award to President Hosny MUBARAK as a Leader.

It is indeed a great pleasure for my delegation to take part in this important meeting under your chairmanship . we would like to express our appreciation of the gigantic effort undertaken by the ICPD Secretary- General Dr.Nafis SADIK and her team to provide us with distillation of the views and recommendations of the various preparatory meetings held so far and in which the Turkish Delegation has actively participated.

We have come from all around the world to address an important issue for the mankind . During the nine days to follow , we shall be discussing an issue which is central to the growth and development of human populations . This is an area which is strongly related to opulence or indigence of humanity . Population and development are issues fundamental to prosperity, equity , and most important of all , to the dignity of mankind

Having been involved in development planning for thirty years , Turkey constitutes one of the good examples for the efforts to integrate population variables in development planning . Through these efforts , it has been observed that the concepts of population policy

were broadened beyond the narrow definitions of family planning

Traditional attitudes of Turkish Government to population policy began to change in 1950s , mainly due to the recognition of health problems , especially the existence of high maternal mortality rates caused by high risk pregnancies . Urbanization and unemployment problems were also factors causing the shift in policy contributing to the new antinatalist policy . The State Planning Organisation, , the Ministry of Health and the Turkish Family Planning Association have initiated the process of policy change .

In your presence may I thank to the devoted efforts of the Turkish NGO's like the "Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation" which has also been recognized by the international community and awarded with the United Nations Population Prize.

Today , rather than continuing on the discussions on the adverse impacts of rapid population growth, the implementation of policies and programs aiming to lower the population growth rate have gained importance in Turkey as they have elsewhere in the world. Population policies are essential for sustainable development.

Mr.Chairman,

At the same time , in spite of all the improvements that have taken place in maternal and child care level in Turkey; high risk pregnancies still are one of the major problems for maternal and child health and keep a vital importance to population issues.

Let us all remember that the final aim of any policy of any

action plan is the individual itself. We are targeting the individual. Every citizen of this world has certain rights and freedoms. Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms without any discrimination. However, we all know the problems that women face.

As the Founder of the Modern Turkish Republic ATATURK once said "How could the countries develop by neglecting women who constitute one half of the population ?" In many instances discrimination starts at very early ages sometimes even before birth. The girl child is denied full equality with the boy child. I am happy to note that, the role of women in development is becoming more clear as the people's overall education awareness and consciousness improve. Women should and are becoming fully integrated in a society, taking responsibilities at all aspects of life. All kinds of discrimination against women should be eliminated.

International Community should also provide all the support possible for the strengthening of the family. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled protection by society and state .

In line with this, Article 41 of the Turkish Constitution considers family as the basic element of the Turkish society. In the same article, the State is given the task of taking all relevant measures to protect the peace and well-being of the family, primarily mothers and their children, and to ensure the education, training and practice of family planning. In accordance with the current needs and developments, new institutional arrangements are underway in Turkey. Shortly before I came to Cairo, we have launched the efforts for the establishment of a High Council for Family Development. We expect that

these efforts will result in establishment of a body with a power of sanction in tackling problems related to family. I hope that this mechanism will promote more efficient intersectoral cooperation.

Many women throughout the world await relief from their anguish through the policies and programs to be derived from the recommendations of this Conference. Women, all over the world suffer from reproductive and sexual health problems. Utilization of reproductive and sexual health services should be promoted in order to achieve physical, mental and social well-being. Deciding freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children and implementing the decisions is a basic and human right as certified in UN documents as early as 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many other documents which followed thereafter like 1979 CEDAW. Failure to respect such rights constitute a strong barrier to enhancing the status of women. At this point let me emphasize one thing. We do not support abortion as a method of family planning. However, we recognize the women's right to safe motherhood. We oppose to coercion in any form that it may exist.

Another important aspect of population and development is their implications for the establishment, development and maintenance of democracy. Two factors are important in population and democracy nexus. The first is the level of integration of women in the democratic decision making process. The second factor is the overall perspective of population in a society. In other words, enjoyment of democratic rights partially depends upon demographic factors.

Mr.Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

In view of high infant and maternal mortality rates, as well as

regional differences in the health level of entire population, the Turkish health care system puts special emphasis on the four A's of health services, namely, accessibility, availability, acceptability and affordability.

As a result of socio-economic development and improvement in the provision of Primary Health Care during the planned period, fertility rate in general and infant mortality rate in particular first decreased slowly and then showed sharp decline. It has been estimated that in 1994 total fertility rate is 2.7 and infant mortality rate is 46.8 per thousand. By the year 2000 AIDS is expected to contribute more than 3 per cent to the "global burden of disease". In that respect, fight against sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS have gained importance in Turkey.

In Turkey, the urban population doubled during the last two decades. Due to inadequate infrastructure and services, environmental problems have intensified in large cities. Starting in the 1970's, Turkey has seen the need to address environmental issues in their interrelationship with other economic and social issues, population being on the forefront. The Government of Turkey has adopted sustainable development as one of the main objectives of its overall policy.

As we have emphasized during the Population Education conference Istanbul, today we are living in an "age of information" Utilizing the technical developments at international standards and providing reliable information are international standards and providing reliable information are important for the determination of development policies by the decision-makers

Each country should begin by strengthening its own national capacity to collect and use population data. May I also add that the importance of women statistics is fully recognized in Turkey. Turkish State Institute of Statistics has already taken a leading role in collecting and disseminating "women statistics". We can share experiences and technology between countries, we should seek equitable ways to assist the transfer of technology among us.

Mr.Chairman,

I would like to point that international migration is another important component of population issues that confront us today. Lately, Turkey has received a substantial number of immigrants. This was due to the political developments in her area. International community and governments should promote the welfare of migrants and their families with particular emphasis on the protection of their rights and family re-unification. Priority should be given to the programs and strategies that combat intolerance and xenophobia as proposed in the draft document.

Mr.Chairman, Distinguished Participants,

ICPD's long run preparations produced a document with a number of brackets., I have a strong belief that during the , discussions here in Cairo, we shall reach consensus and present a useful document to the people of world who await solutions for their problems.

I wish this Conference every success. The future of this planet will depend on its decisions and their implementation. We need a better

world. We need a high quality of life and peace.

Summing up, I would like to reiterate the support of the Republic of Turkey to the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations and the Conference.

In this line, I would like to invite you to the last UN Conference of this century, United Nations Conference on Human Settlement, i.e. HABITAT-II; which will be held in Istanbul in 1996 to share our contemporary experiences on the humanitarian issues.

I would once again like to express my whole hearted thanks and appreciation to H.E. Boutros GHALI Secretary General of the UN and to Dr.Nafis SADIK Secretary General of the conference and the Executive Director of UNFPA, for their inexhaustible energy and dedication in organizing this conference.

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For further information, please contact: [popin@undp.org](mailto:popin@undp.org)  
POPIN Gopher site: <gopher://gopher.undp.org/11/ungophers/popin>  
POPIN WWW site: <http://www.undp.org/popin>