



## **94-09-07: Statement of Bahamas, H.E.Mrs. Theresa Moxey-Ingraham**

ISO: BHS

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The electronic preparation of this document has been done by the  
 Population Information Network(POPIN) of the United Nations Population  
 Division in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme

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AS WRITTEN

MADAM CHAIRMAN:

WE WISH TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ELECTION AS CHAIRMAN OF  
 THIS HISTORIC CONFERENCE . WE EXTEND TO YOU THE WARM WISHES OF THE  
 GOVERNMENT & PEOPLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS . FOR YOUR  
 SUCCESSFUL GUIDANCE OF THIS MEETING . THE HARD WORK UNDERTAKEN BY UNFPA  
 IN THE PREP-COMMITTEE IS ALSO LAUDABLE, AND ANY SUCCESS WE ACHIEVE WILL  
 BE THE RESULT OF THAT DEDICATED SERVICE.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS IS A ARCHIPELAGO OF OVER 700 ISLANDS AND  
 CAYS COVERING APPROXIMATELY 80,000 MILES ( 215,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS )  
 OFF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN . THE BAHAMAS LIES JUST 50 MILES (81 KILOMETERS)  
 EAST OF FLORIDA (U.S.A.) AND EXTENDS 750 MILES ( 1,200 KILOMETERS)  
 SOUTHEASTWARD TO WITHIN 50 MILES OF CUBA AND HAITI .

THE TOTAL LAND AREA OF THE BAHAMAS IS APPROXIMATELY 5,382

SQUARE MILES ( 15, 000 SQUARE KILOMETERS), ABOUT THE SIZE OF WALES, OR ABOUT TWO THIRDS THE SIZE OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN THE UNITED STATES

TWENTY- TWO ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS ARE INHABITED BUT THE BULK OF THE POPULATION RESIDE ON FOURTEEN OF THEM . THE POPULATION DENSITY OF THE ISLANDS, RANGES FROM 2152 PER SQUARE MILES IN NEW PROVIDENCE TO 1.6 PER SQUARE MILES IN THE LEAST POPULATED ISLAND .

THE POPULATION OF THE BAHAMAS WAS 209.5 THOUSAND IN 1980 AND 255.1 THOUSAND IN 1990, SIXTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF WHOM RESIDE ON THE CAPITAL ISLAND OF NEW PROVIDENCE . DESPITE RECENT DECREASES IN THE BIRTH RATE, THE POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE AT ABOUT 1.9 PERCENT PER ANNUM . BECAUSE OF THE YOUTHFUL AGE OF THE POPULATION, AND THE INCREASE IN THE COHORT OF WOMEN IN THEIR FERTILE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF BIRTHS PER ANNUM WILL STILL BE LARGE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME . OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, THE LABOR FORCE HAS BEEN GROWING AT AN ALARMING RATE OF 85 PERCENT . THIS HAS TREMENDOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES .

IN TERMS OF ITS ECONOMY, THE BAHAMAS DEPENDS HEAVILY ON SINGLE INDUSTRY, TOURISM, WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE INDUSTRY OR AGRICULTURAL INPUT . IN RECENT TIMES GROWTH IN THE AREA OF TOURISM HAS STAGNATED AND THE BAHAMAS IS FACED WITH THE REAL CHALLENGE OF FINDING NEW WAYS TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH . FOR RESIDENTS OF THE " FAMILY ISLANDS ", THEIR ISOLATION FROM NEW PROVIDENCE MEANS LIMITED ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES .

AN INCREASING POPULATION AND DECLINING RESOURCES HAVE BROUGHT INTO SHARP FOCUS THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND

INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

AT THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, WE APPROACH  
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT WITH FIVE DIFFERENT CONCERNS IN MIND :

1. THE FIRST IS THE ARCHIPELAGIC FEATURE OF THE COUNTRY WHICH REQUIRES REPLICATION OF BASIC SERVICES ( HEALTH, EDUCATION, ETC. ) TO ALL THE ISLANDS AND COMMUNITIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH, AND THE RELATED DEMAND FOR RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE BORDER SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY.

2. THE SECOND IS THE GROWING TREND TOWARDS SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES AND THE CAPACITY OF THESE FAMILIES TO PROVIDE THE NURTURING AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT REQUIRED BY FAMILY MEMBERS. FURTHER, THERE IS THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES ARE FULLY RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVERSE AND CHANGING REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILIES IN THEIR VARIOUS FORMS.

3. THE THIRD IS THE HEALTH OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE, DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION MEASURES, THE RISE IN SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES INCLUDING AIDS, MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES AND FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

4. THE FOURTH IS THE EFFECTS OF AN UNRELENTING INFLOW OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS UPON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF OUR ISLAND NATION . THIS REPRESENTS A VERY REAL BURDEN ON THE LIMITED AND DWINDLING RESOURCES OF THE HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE AGENCIES WHICH ARE FINDING IT MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO MEET THE PRESSING DEMANDS FOR SERVICES . MADAM CHAIRMAN, THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACCELERATE BEYOND SELF-SERVING PURSUITS . RATHER WHAT IS REQUIRED IS THE FIRM COMMITMENT OF DEVELOPED & DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO WORK COLLECTIVELY TO ARRIVE AT AN APPROACH THAT WILL COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF MIGRATION. WE IN THE BAHAMAS HAVE FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES BEEN

FACED WITH THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MIGRATION AND NO LONGER HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ABSORB ADDITIONAL IMMIGRANTS .NOT EVEN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS . WE ARE HOWEVER, HOPEFUL THAT AT THE END OF THIS CONFERENCE, WE WILL ARRIVE AT RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WILL ASSIST IN POSITIVELY RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL COUNTRIES LIKE MY OWN . TO THIS END, WE CALL ON THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FURTHER, THE TASK OF NATION BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG INDEPENDENT COUNTRY IS SEVERELY COMPROMISED BY LARGE NUMBERS OF UN-DOCUMENTED MIGRANTS IN PROPORTION TO THE SMALL POPULATION OF AN ISLAND NATION .

5. THE FIFTH CONCERN RELATES TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WHERE OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS CENTRAL TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THAT IT EMBRACES NOT ONLY LABOR SUPPLY AND DEMAND, BUT TREATS POPULATION DYNAMICS IN THEIR MULTIPLE ASPECTS AS ENDOGENOUS TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

6. THE SIXTH CONCERN IS CENTERED AROUND THE STATUS OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY . THERE ARE MANY ISSUES INVOLVED HERE THAT IMPACT UPON OUR CAPACITY TO DEVELOP . THESE INVOLVE THE GROWING NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY WOMEN, MANY OF WHOM ARE ELDERLY; WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH; ADOLESCENT PREGNANCIES; SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN; WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE; WOMEN'S PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES, AMONG OTHERS .

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE AND ALL THE OTHER CONCERNS ARTICULATED BY MY COLLEAGUES OVER THE PAST DAYS PRESENT US WITH A CHALLENGE TO COMMIT TO A PLAN OF ACTION THAT WILL ENSURE AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING . GENERATIONS NOT YET

BORN.

IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT TIME IS SHORT AND THE NEED FOR ACTION IS URGENT . I EXHORT YOU TO PLEDGE YOURSELVES TO WORK TOGETHER :

a. TO ENHANCE THE HEALTH OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE,

b. TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN,

c. TO HALT DESTRUCTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, AND

d. TO ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT POPULATION POLICIES THAT ARE RATIONAL, EQUITABLE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS .

GOVERNMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES ARE URGED TO SEIZE THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT IN PLACE A PLAN OF ACTION THAT WILL ALLEVIATE MANY OF THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING HUMANITY.

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