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AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT

OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

TO THE PLENARY SESSION

OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

(Cairo, 7 September 1 994)

The demographic situation has never been so complex in the
history of mankind than at present, only a few years away of the
beginning of the third millenium. All phases of the classical
demographic transition are now simultaneously present in the world
population. High fertility and mortality are characteristic of the

demographic situation in the less developed regions, whilst low fertility and favourable or unfavourable mortality can be observed in the developed world. However, because of their dimensions and significance, those problems cannot be handled by giving them equal priority. Since the numerically overwhelming majority of the world population is in that phase of demographic transition which is still characterized by rapid population growth, the solution of the local and regional socioeconomic and environmental problems requires global cooperation. We think that the issues discussed and the principles adopted in the course of the Conference truly reflect these priorities.

In the handling of the problems arising from population increase, nations have never been so dependent on each other as they are now and will be in the decades to come. This interdependence means that with regard to the survival and harmonious progress of mankind the interests and aims are common. These common interests and aims should motivate the individual countries to do their best - by using their means and resources and guided by their universal responsibility in the interest of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted here. From this approach the roles of the developed and developing countries and the tasks of the rich and developing regions are already different.

The common interests and aims and the priorities arising should not mean that the various nations and regions do not have their own problems, and objectives as a consequence of their specific demographic changes. It has become more and more evident, especially since the sixties, that the demographic processes of our planet have a double feature. A huge part of the world has to face a rapid increase in population size and its socioeconomic and environmental consequences. The populations of Europe and of other developed regions are entering a

new phase of demographic transition: i.e. aging and, in certain cases, population decrease. The controversial consequences of the population decrease of some of the European societies are already visible and inspire anxiety. It is necessary to join forces in order to find the way in which the population changes in the developed countries could - in spite of the cultural differences - acquire a model value also for the less developed countries whose populations are still increasing at steep rates. It seems to be certain that the population decrease of the more developed countries cannot at present be a model to be followed by the countries of the Third World due to many unfavourable consequences.

Attention should also be called to the different aspects of the family and, in this regard, of human reproduction which vary by cultures. Consequently, to study the different aspects of reproduction and population only in the context of human and women's rights and of health-related, or sexual problems is far from being enough. Beyond, and even before, it is necessary to take into consideration the ethical values of the family and the inclination and responsibility to have children in the various cultures and to avoid, even in the form of international recommendations, coercion by which societies and cultural and religious communities are forced to adopt forms of fertility behaviour alien to their own value system.

In recent years a favourable turn has taken place in the long-standing socioeconomic and political division of Europe. The nations of Central and Eastern Europe are at the beginning to build democratic societies. These countries are making efforts to catch up economically, socially and politically with the more developed Western European countries. This is accompanied by a transitory state of affairs of shorter or longer duration in which, parallel to the economic difficulties accompanying the transition, social tensions also appear.

This process has also demographic consequences the initial signs of which have already become visible in recent years. In several formerly socialist countries there has been a strong decrease in fertility. Thus, it is this domain in which these countries can approach the Western European level in the shortest time. The same, however, does not apply to mortality the level of which was much more unfavourable than in established market economies. In this case, unfortunately no signs of improvement or catching up have become visible in recent years. Thus, the aging is taking place in a decreasing population . Hungary is also one of these countries where under these circumstances, decreasing mortality and achieving simple reproduction level are the two most important goals in the demographic strategy of the government. In order to accomplish this aim it is intended to implement a population policy respecting individual freedom and the responsible free decisions of the families. Also attempting to create an economic situation and a social atmosphere which strengthen the family, improve the economic situation of families with children and promotes to increase the value individuals and families attach to health.

The demographic situation of the developed world in general, and of Europe in particular is an essential part of the demographic situation of the whole world; to put it in another way: it indicates the interdependence of countries and regions. In this context it is worth while to mention that the interests of the less developed countries and regions would be served only, if the more developed countries reduce their socioeconomic difficulties arising also from their controversial demographic condition.

The already prevailing aging of the population is bringing to the

surface social tensions related to the specific demographic situation which will have also long-term economic and, mainly, financial implications. This means also that the resources from which many of the developed countries can support the less developed ones may become scarce. Consequently, the economic prosperity of the developed countries and the reducing their demographic difficulties are also in the interest of the less developed countries.

We think that, for this, a population of balanced age-composition is necessary. Thus, while accepting the priorities which follow from the world demographic situation and the tasks we have to fulfill in this regard, our basic efforts are directed at having a population which is stable and balanced in its age structure for avoiding all the consequences inherent in the aging of society. It is our belief that this is in no contradiction with the basic principles, aims and the Programme of Action.

Finally may I express our opinion that if the Governments and the responsible institutions of the various countries would make efforts, to reach a demographic situation in which the population is stable and its age-structure is more balanced, this might ease present and expected world-wide problems arising from the still rapid population increase.

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