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AS WRITTEN

Implementing the Cairo Action Agenda

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The decisions and actions resulting from this conference are of
 critical importance to the well-being of the planet and its people.

Our collective action—or inaction—will determine whether millions
 of women and men continue to be denied the basic human right to have
 only those children they want and to choose when to have them.

It will determine whether hundreds of thousands of women continue
 to die each year from complications of pregnancy, childbirth, unsafe
 abortion and, increasingly, from AIDS.

It will determine whether billions of people continue to live in

grinding poverty, subsisting on less than 52 each per day.

It will determine whether the North and South continue to degrade the earth's basic biological systems through excessive consumption and rapid population growth—or whether these systems will be preserved for future generations.

The Programme of Action to be adopted in Cairo provides a comprehensive and sound strategy for moving forward on all these fronts. It represents an important step toward an international consensus on population and development. The future of our children and grandchildren depends on how effectively we put these fine words into action.

The greatest uncertainty relating to the conference relates to whether the necessary resources will be forthcoming to implement the programme that is adopted. Sufficient funds—and the political will to mobilize them—are critical to the ultimate success of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

So where do we go and what will it cost us to get there?

The individual must be at the heart of all development efforts. As such we need to invest in human capital—in the knowledge, health and welfare of individuals. Within this context, the focus of population policies should be to improve the status of women—especially by educating the young girls who will become the women and mothers of tomorrow—and to meet the demand for family planning and reproductive health care.

Within the area of reproductive health, two neglected areas

urgently need attention: family planning services for unmarried young people and safe abortion. By the year 2000 there will be almost a billion teenagers in the world, most of whom will become sexually active during their teenage years. But at present, only the Western European countries with contraceptive services. The result is an epidemic of unintended pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases among young people worldwide.

Over the last ten years—since the 1984 population conference—a million women have died because, lacking other choices, they resorted to unsafe abortion rather than continue an unintended pregnancy. We must deal forthrightly with the fact that one in four pregnancies ends in abortion, for a total of about 50 million abortions each year. It is long past time to provide the universal access to family planning which will minimize the need for abortion and to make this common and necessary procedure safe for those women who choose it as a last resort.

We must not be deterred by controversy. We must meet the need for both reproductive health and reproductive freedom.

The key to successfully implementing the Programme of Action is money. Developed countries enjoy a disproportionate share of the world's income—they have a moral obligation to share their wealth and technology. The international community has agreed that rich countries should be providing about 0.7 percent of GNP for development assistance. But only Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden are meeting or exceeding this goal. On average, development aid currently represents less than half of the recommended 0.7 percent level. I am sorry to say the United States lags behind the other major donors in the share of its GNP going to development assistance.

The donor community also has a poor track record on population assistance. In 1989, the international community suggested at a meeting in Amsterdam that rich countries should allocate four percent of total development aid for population assistance. But only Norway has consistently met this four percent guideline. On average, in recent years, the donor community has spent only about one percent of total development assistance on population programs. Similarly, the World Bank has provided less than one percent of total annual lending for population activities.

Recently, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States—as well as the European Union—have made major new funding commitments. But other donors have yet to step forward.

The United Nations Development Programme is urging a "20/20 Compact," whereby donors and governments alike would boost social sector spending to 20 percent of their budgets. This would enable health budgets to expand a broad range of services for women and children and education budgets to provide adequate funds for education, especially of girls.

The ICPD Programme of Action has recommended that annual spending for population programs reach \$17 billion by the year 2000, to support family planning as well as other related services such as basic health care for pregnant women and efforts to prevent AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases. The ICPD funding goals are ambitious relative to current family planning expenditures, estimated at roughly \$4 to \$5 billion a year. Meeting these goals will require substantially increased outlays from donors and developing country governments and consumers.

Meeting the ICPD goals will require donor countries to boost their grant assistance from just \$800 million in 1992 to about \$5.7 billion in the year 2000, or roughly one third of projected financial needs. The World Bank and other multilateral lending institutions will need to increase concessional loans for population from about \$200 million to \$1 billion annually. Even with these increased aid levels, governments and consumers in developing countries will still need to increase expenditures on family planning almost three-fold to more than \$11 billion, to meet the goals identified by the Programme of Action.

Going beyond the funding guidelines laid out in the Programme of Action, we could, for roughly \$75 billion a year above current expenditures, provide universal access to family planning, basic health care for women and their children, and universal primary education. All this for less than a nickel a day for every person in the world.

The Programme of Action is an enlightened document, a document of hope, and one on which our future quality of life depends. Working together, we can summon the political will and financial resources needed to make the action plan a reality. Our failure to do so will impair the quality of life for generations to come. Our success will make the world a better place for all posterity. Let's get on with the work of raising more resources and expanding good quality services on the ground.

organization founded in 1965 that is committed to universal access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services, reproductive freedom for women and men, and early stabilization of world population

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