



94-09-07: Statement of Slovenia, H.E. Mrs. Rina Klinar

ISO: SVN

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

AS WRITTEN

International Conference
on Population and Development
Cairo, 5 - 13 September 1994

STATEMENT

of Mrs. RINA KLINAR,
Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs
of the Republic of Slovenia

(Cairo, 7 September 1994)

Check against delivery

Mr. President, Madam Secretary General, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning, I would like to express the gratitude of the Slovenian delegation to the host country, particularly to President Hosni Mubarak for the warm and cordial hospitality in the beautiful city of Cairo. I am confident that his wise and skillful guidance will bring the Conference to a successful end.

My thanks go also to the Secretary General Dr. Nafis Sadik and the ICPD Secretariat for the excellent organization of the Conference. Slovenia became an independent and sovereign state on 25th June 1991 and a member of the United Nations in May 1992.

Since its independence the Slovenian society and its economy have been experiencing dynamic changes as a consequence of wider social changes and the transformation from a plan economy to a market economy. The increase of unemployment, worsening of the conditions of living of certain population groups, emigration of highly skilled population, substantial inflow of refugees are just some of the issues we are facing in the transition period.

My government is pleased that most of these problems are addressed in the documents of this Conference as specific and common problems of countries with the economies in transition. Their successful solution will be largely facilitated with an early inclusion of these countries in the European integration processes. To achieve this aim, Slovenia has established a closed co-operation with the Central European states.

Another issue I would like to address is the prolonged stay of the temporary refugees in Slovenia. With the substantial support of the international community, Slovenia coped with this problem successfully. We expect that the refugee burden will be equitably shared and not imposed only on the bordering countries.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to direct your attention to the demographic situation in Slovenia. It is similar to the situation in a number of European countries and developed part of the world as a whole.

The demographic transition ended in Slovenia some thirty years ago. The level of fertility in the country is one of the lowest in Europe and in the world. In 1993, the total fertility rate was no more than 1.31. The decreasing fertility is the most significant determinant of the aging of the population.

The transitional period of the early 90s has completely changed the migration trends in the country. An almost complete halt of the immigration flow caused a negative net migration.

If you take into consideration that the population of Slovenia is less than 2 millions, these changes can result in even more serious demographic problems than in other countries. ,

In the effort to establish a consistent and integrative population policy, Slovenia has been implementing numerous partial policies, programs and measures, which produce indirect effects on the population, development. The characteristics of these indirect policies can be seen in a more detailed way in our National Report.

Allow me only a few words here. Our new Constitution prescribes that Slovenia is a social welfare state. In the transition period it has started the transformation of the social welfare system, partly preserving the existing level of social security and welfare programs.

The Constitution guarantees our citizens the right to social security and requires the state to ensure the conditions for the health, retirement, disability, unemployment and other forms of compulsory insurance as well as social protection for less privileged groups of the population. It also guarantees family welfare programs which consist of benefits and special services for families.

After 1990, some changes in social security and welfare system have been made, but they were rather slow, not radical.

In the health-insurance field, the new order preserved the universal right to medical care for all, yet at a partly lower level than before. At the same time, it introduced voluntary forms of health insurance for certain health services.

The new Law on Pensions and Disability Insurance has preserved the right deriving from work and is based on obligatory contribution by the insureds and employers. The changes which the new law has introduced are an increase in the age of entitlement to the old-age retirement and the creation of the possibility for additional/voluntary forms of personal insurance.

In the field of employment, changes began to be introduced intended to adapt to the principles of market regulation, especially with the abolition of mechanisms of protecting work relations and the

introduction of the active employment policy. ,4

In the field of social assistance for the less privileged groups of population, the system of aid was unified, duplication and accumulation were abolished. A new, lower, poverty line was set through the introduction of guaranteed wages and index-linking mechanisms.

The formation of a family policy as a conscious, organized and coordinated activity for the creation and improvement of living conditions of families, especially child-rearing families, is based on the adoption of the Resolution on the Foundations of Family Policy in 1993.

According to the Constitution, the state must also guarantee its citizens the implementation of the national program of public services in the field of child care and pre-school education, regular education, care for the aged and disabled, health care, social services etc. The network that Slovenia has established in these fields is relatively well developed, but it is still mostly linked to public institutions. One could say that 'Slovenia is still in the initial stages of the privatisation and pluralisation of the system of these services.

The housing sector is probably in a worse situation which is significantly connected with the population issues prevailing in Slovenia at the moment. The old housing policy institutes and mechanisms have been almost abolished, especially through the privatisation process of flats after 1991, but new ones have not been created yet or are only now being introduced.

The Slovenian government will in the coming years focus on development of the non-profit sector and also secure stable financial resources

from the state as well as strengthen the National Housing Fund.

In addition, I would like to point out that Slovenia has adopted nearly all principles of the international conventions concerning women's rights and in some areas provided even more favourable arrangements. Such an example is the maternity leave which lasts one year on full pay and can be used by either of the parents. There are favourable arrangements for the child care support as well.

Modern family planning in Slovenia dates back to the 1950s when up-to-date and reliable contraceptives were introduced and a network of outpatients' clinics with counseling on contraceptives and prevention of abortion was established.

As a result of the liberalisation of legal abortion in 1977 and of intensive education of reproductive couples, the number of legally performed abortions has been constantly decreasing since 1981. Today, Slovenia belongs among the countries with the lowest rate of maternal deaths.

Much has been done also in the field of gender equality. However, this equity was secured primarily through full employment and well developed social security system. The female employment rate in Slovenia is traditionally high; the share of the women in the employed population has reached almost 47%. The proportions of the male and female populations in the population covered by the educational system are also very similar. Less equality is still in the division of labour in the family. The double burden carried by women (employment and care of children and household work) results also in their lower involvement in political activities.

Finally, I would like to stress that many facets of the expressed policies of my Government are in accordance with the documents of this Conference. Therefore I am pleased to say that we fully support the adoption of the documents prepared for the Conference and that the Slovenian government will do its best for their implementation.

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