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AS WRITTEN

SPEECH BY

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Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not my intention to deal with the wide spectrum of issues arising out of the population explosion with which the global community is expected to be faced. I would like instead to concentrate primarily on the interrelationship between population growth and socio-economic and industrial development. It is my firm belief that unless accelerated industrialization and related technological advancement in developing countries are recognized as crucial and fundamental elements of development, any Programme of action or measures linking population with overall development strategies and objectives will not only be incomplete but may also be fundamentally undermined.

The world's population is likely to increase rapidly, with most of the increase concentrated in certain developing countries and regions. By the year 2010, that is, within a little more than 15 years, it is expected that out of a total global population of 7.15 billion, 5.8 billion will be in developing countries alone. The projected rate of population growth is expected to be among the highest for most of the sub-Saharan African countries and the Least Developed Countries. It is also anticipated that there will continue to be substantial migration to areas of urban concentration in developing countries and that by 2010, the urban population in these countries will increase to 2.72 billion. The fastest urban growth rate is expected in African countries.

It is clear from the various documents, that an immense challenge is undoubtedly posed by the staggering projections of population growth, a challenge which is greatly exacerbated by the fact that such growth is largely concentrated in the poorer and most vulnerable economies. The low per capita income in these countries will be pushed down further below poverty levels. A complex range of

developmental problems have to be tackled in most of these countries, extending from provision of basic necessities to the generation of employment, increased income and efficient utilization of depletable resources. Urban migration and growing urban unemployment, not only increase the pressure on the overstretched urban infrastructure in these countries but also highlight the need for providing gainful employment in both urban and rural regions. Unless these problems can be effectively solved, socio-economic pressures and tensions will increase sharply in these countries and could extend beyond national boundaries.

The grave socio-economic implications of the estimated population growth requires careful consideration of the intricate relationship between population growth and improved socio-economic conditions and quality of life. This is not only vital for achieving equitable and sustainable development, but to ensure that, in subsequent decades, population growth rates can decline steadily to the point at which global population can be stabilized by the end of the 21st century. We must also consider the overall availability of resources necessary to sustain the massive projected increase in global population.

Historically, population growth in Europe during the 19th and early decades of the 20th century was successfully countered, partly by migration out of the region, partly by increased agricultural productivity, but largely because of the impact of the industrial revolution. Today, with improved standards of living and increased investments in health and education, made possible by successive stages of industrialization, population growth has tended to decline in industrialized economies, to a stage when relative stabilization of population growth can be considered to have been reached in most of these countries.

In most developing countries, socio-economic conditions declined during the first half of this century, while their population continued to grow rapidly. However, with rapid industrial growth in several developing countries in the last three decades, there has been a significant decline in population growth levels, particularly in certain South-East Asian countries. For example, in the Republic of Korea, which is representative of other newly-industrializing economies such as Singapore, Hong kong, Thailand and Indonesia, industrialization has resulted in a combination of rising household incomes, improved education and health, and dynamic family planning programmes. Korea's average annual population growth rate fell to 1.7 per cent in the period 1965-1990 while its per capita education investment rose by 1,330 per cent, and its equivalent health investment by 1,800 per cent. During this period, rapid growth of output, and exports of manufactures allowed considerable employment generation in industry and industry related services, in parallel with rising productivity rates and salaries. It is difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between decreased population growth and increased industrial development. However, the experience of a large number of countries suggests that, with improved socio-economic conditions and living standards stemming from the spin-offs of industrialization, and increased investment in health and education, the population growth rate tends to decline significantly.

The massive projection of population growth, even by 2010, poses problems which inevitably have global impact and significance. With increased population mobility in most regions, the pressures for large-scale migration from developing countries to industrialized economies will certainly become increasingly intensified. The gap in living standards between industrialized and less developed countries may not only be increasingly widened but there may also be a further decline

in living conditions in poorer countries to levels which are unacceptable. This necessitates both that socio-economic conditions, particularly for more vulnerable sections of the population in these countries, are significantly improved and that a decline in the rate of population growth is brought about.

There are also obvious constraints on finite resources, and dire predictions are being made of massive food shortages in the future if the population explosion outstrips food supply. Agricultural productivity and supplies of essential inputs may be significantly enhanced by technological advancements, in agro related industrial sectors and particularly in biotechnology and genetic engineering. However, these innovative developments will need to be extended and applied in developing countries.

Population growth can only be stabilized through a combination of measures and programmes at international and national levels. While education, health and family planning programmes of developing countries must be given major attention, the highest priority should be granted to implement a broad-based Programme for socio-economic and industrial development in these countries. Besides increased production of food and essential supplies, it is primarily accelerated industrial and related technological development which would have the most impact on the rate of population growth. The direct effects of industrial development on population growth would be through increased employment and household incomes leading to improved standards of living. At the same time, there is an indirect relationship which takes the form of rapid population growth being associated with lower living standards and slower growth of per capita income, while higher per capita income tends to result in decline in fertility levels and reduced population growth. Slow economic and industrial growth,

accompanied by poverty, which is a feature of least developed countries is, however, as much a cause of rapid population growth as an effect, and a comprehensive Programme for socio-economic and industrial development is necessary to break the vicious circle.

In most developing countries, improvements in agricultural productivity are proceeding hand-in-hand with increased industrial activity and industrial employment. Few developing countries could envisage a development pattern without a major share of GDP emanating from industrial development or related service sectors.

Sometimes we tend to forget the lessons of history. The gradual transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial economy is perhaps the most powerful mechanism for generating productive employment, increasing productivity and combating poverty. Much attention has been granted to conceptual discussion on post industrial societies; much less, unfortunately to the fact that all major countries have developed through industry, and that the satisfaction of basic needs and even of secondary needs, depends now, more than ever, from manufacturing and industry services networks whether in the field of health, education, communications or entertainment. Increased industrialization also changes cultural attitudes and priorities, which are often reflected in decreasing levels of fertility. Industrialization also implies acceleration of skill development, not only for manufacturing but also for associated services and for the society at large. In short, the process of industrialization and the modernizing culture that accompany it, has multiplier effects and far reaching consequences in all sectors of society.

The pattern of industrial development must, however, no:

only be sustainable in relation to national priorities and factor endowments, but must have built-in social dimensions and objectives. It should result in the development of an enabling environment for mobilization of productive investments, besides providing the necessary infrastructure and institutional support for development of human resources and technological competitiveness, on the one hand, and to meet essential basic needs of the community, on the other. The industrial growth pattern must also reduce regional disparities between and within countries and bring about more equitable distribution and decentralization of industrial enterprises and employments. Varying levels of institutional and technological policy support must also be provided for the growth of entrepreneurship capability and for establishment of a wide range of small and medium industries in the urban sector and rural areas closely linked to agriculture.

The role of national governments is obviously critical to the development of appropriate strategies for more broad-based industrial development, which would have the desired impact on population growth in particular countries. The activities of non-government organizations, including not only those involved in family planning but those dealing with industrial and integrated rural development and with providing income-generating opportunities for women, would also be of increasing importance and relevance.

In UNIDO we consider that a key issue is the effective integration and full participation of women in the entire process of sustainable industrial development. It is generally recognized that there is a link between fertility rates, literacy levels and paid employment and studies indicate that the more women are engaged in paid employment activities, the lower is the fertility rate, the higher is the literacy level and higher is the life expectancy. Measures to reduce

the fertility rate may not necessarily achieve the expected results if these are not supported by actions aimed at increasing employment and high value added activities such as those generated in manufacturing and industry related services. The number of female-headed households is on the increase, particularly in a number of African countries; this fact combined with the increase and number of people living in absolute poverty reinforces the urgent need to involve women increasingly in the entire development process and to ensure that women are provided with adequate employment and income-generating activities.

The enormous magnitude of the population problem and the wide range of socio-economic and industrial programmes and activities required to effectively tackle this problem necessitates the active intervention of the international community. It is my firm conviction that unless the resources of the international community and of various international organizations and agencies are effectively harnessed, it will not be possible to achieve the necessary impact on population growth.

Mr. President,

UNIDO has undertaken recently a major reform to meet with the new global challenges of socio-economic and industrial growth in developing countries, giving particular attention to African countries and the least developed economies. The reoriented priorities of UNIDO relate to ensuring accelerated industrialization, international competitiveness and technological advancement in these countries, but also to achieving a more equitable pattern of industrial growth, concentrating on reducing regional imbalances and placing major emphasis on small and medium industries and on rural industrial development and employment creation. We are giving particular attention to the

enhancement of women in industrialization through a very successful Programme that is being reinforced at the regional and country level in co-ordination with other UN organizations.

UNIDO also considers human resource development as a sine qua non for socio-economic stability, and fully endorses principle 14 of the Programme of Action. With respect to environmentally sustainable development, UNIDO is fully involved in the implementation of Agenda 21. Mr. President, we shall make every effort on our side to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of this Conference, are achieved as rapidly as possible. However, it is vital, at the same time, that the implications and impact of industrial development and technological advancement on population growth in the less- developed economies are fully recognized and appropriately reflected in the Programme of Action drawn up by this Conference.

Finally, Mr. President, let us put to work all our imagination all our political will so that the wealth of cultural diversity present at this Conference may help to build not another Babel Tower, but rather, the Tower of Consensus, a platform of hope from which may emerge in the next 25 years a healthier, better educated, more equitable and happier planet. Thank you.

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