



94-09-07: Statement of UN/CSD, Dr. Klaus Topfer

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AS WRITTEN

Speech given by

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in his capacity as

Chairman of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

at the

International Conference on Population and Development

held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994

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Mr Chairman

Mr Secretary General

Madame Executive Secretary

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to have this opportunity of speaking at this important Conference in my capacity as Chairman of the Commission for Sustainable Development. I offer my congratulations to the chairman and members of the Bureau on their election. I greatly admire and appreciate the tremendous preparatory work that has been done for this conference by the host country and the personal commitment of Dr Sadik.

The Commission for Sustainable Development was mandated by the Conference on Environment and Development, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 as the instrument to monitor the implementation and further elaboration of the Final Act of Rio, above all the Agenda 21 action programme and the Rio Declaration on Sustainable Development.

In Rio, we rightly made it clear that population development in all parts of the world is at once a determining and a resultant factor of economic, social and ecological development. Principle 8 of the Rio Declaration states that in order to achieve sustainable development and a better quality of life for all people, countries should dismantle and remove non-sustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote a suitable policy on population. Chapter 5 of Agenda 21 gives clear mandates for action in the areas of population and sustainable development. The Commission will review these obligations for action at its next meeting to be held in spring next year, which we are in the process of preparing at the moment.

The high level of environmentally subsidised consumption in the

countries of the North - their patterns of consumption and production - run counter to sustainable development. Poverty and underdevelopment in many countries of the South are in part the direct and indirect result.

Principle 8 of the Rio Declaration I mentioned a moment ago shows quite plainly that the supreme priority for sustainable development must be the removal of non-sustainable structures. Only in this way can we break out of the vicious circle of poverty, underdevelopment, over-exploitation of resources, environmental deterioration and population growth. This is why changing patterns of consumption and production is and remains a central issue of the CSD.

On the basis of the particular responsibility they bear for global environmental damage, the developed countries must take the lead here and act. Up to now, the prosperity of the developed countries has been subsidised at the expense of future generations, the natural environment and the global society. Even today the South loses out to the regionalisation of the advantages and the globalisation of the disadvantages of the patterns of production and consumption of the developed countries.

Non-sustainable structures in the North have also had serious negative consequences for the development conditions of developing countries. Our present economic system and way of life has been at the root of climate change, desertification and the ongoing depletion of biological diversity. We have created important instruments binding under international law for globally harmonised action, in the Rio conventions on climate change and on biological diversity and the recently adopted convention to combat desertification. I also want to mention the forest principles of Rio as well as the action programme for the sustainable development of small island developing states. Their consistent

implementation and further elaboration represents a significant contribution towards sustainable development. The restructured and replenished Global Environment Facility (GEF) is providing over 2 billion US dollars for relevant projects in developing countries, a first step at a minimum level.

The menacing threat of shortage of water, the alarming developments in global food production, combined with increased pollution and overuse of the soil resulting in shortages of agricultural areas, the shortage of energy resources and the possible results this will have on the climate as well as our growing mountains of waste: all these are also part of the complex challenge to be faced by each individual country and by the international community as a whole. The Commission for Sustainable Development must press resolutely ahead with its action-oriented work, and must also play its part in dealing with the problem of population and sustainable development. At the second session of the CSD in May 1994, we adopted priority mandates for action in the field of water, waste, health and human settlements. Land resources - including forests and deserts -, sustainable agriculture and biological diversity are the central sectoral issues of the third CSD session due to be held next year.

Of major importance for all sectoral issues is progress in the cross-sectoral questions of financing, technology and capacity-building. Here, the CSD has set specific mandates for action. This is true of the development of innovative instruments such as emission charges to mobilize additional financial resources. Technological partnership projects among countries and especially with the private sector are designed to further cooperation in the development and transfer of environmentally sound and socially just technologies. The increased

efforts at education and training which have been called for and in all other areas of capacity-building are not only essential prerequisites for sustainable development, but also the fundamental elements of successful population policy.

This short overview shows that measures towards sustainable development support, promote and create the prerequisites for the strategies required for a successful policy on population. This interdependence is clearly reflected especially in chapter 3 on the interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development of the Programme of Action to be adopted by this Conference. It is based on and repeatedly refers to Agenda 21.

The integrated approach to combatting poverty, providing medical care, education and training and managing resources in a sustainable way is promising of success. Thus, experience has shown that population policy measures such as family planning services are particularly effective when they are combined with measures to meet basic human need. In the preparations for this Conference, particular stress was rightly laid on the central role of women. This corresponds to the approach made by Agenda 21 which identifies women as a significant major group within society. The integrated approach to population and development policy described above is unthinkable without better-educated women who have a strengthened status within society and improved possibilities for self-determination and self-responsibility.

Mr Chairman

The Human Development Agenda of Cairo is indivisibly linked to Agenda 21, the Rio action programme for sustainable development. As Chairman of CSD, I should like to stress that the United Nations Commission for Sustainable

Development is ready to give its resolute assistance to the follow-up process to this Conference on Population and Development. We definitely need close coordination and cooperation between all the different ongoing conference processes within the UN system in order to ensure that the efforts of all parties are mutually supportive.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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