



94-09-08: Statement of Suriname, H.E. Saban Sabiran

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AS WRITTEN

ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAM,
H.E. SABAN SABIRAN TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT CAIRO - EGYPT, 8TH SEPTEMBER 1994

MR. PRESIDENT,
DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,
MINISTERS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

AT THE OUTSET, LET ME JOIN THE PREVIOUS SPEAKERS, IN CONGRATULATING YOU.

MR. PRESIDENT. ON YOUR ELECTION TO PRESIDE OVER OUR DELIBERATIONS.

I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT UNDER YOUR CHAIRMANSHIP THIS CONFERENCE WILL
RESULT IN A SET OF INNOVATIVE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF
ALL NATIONS IN THE WORLD. MAY I ALSO EXTEND MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THEIR OFFICES OF THIS

CONFERENCE.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT FOR HOSTING THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE. FOR THE EXCELLENT FACILITIES OFFERED TO US AND THE KIND HOSPITALITY WE EXPERIENCED SINCE OUR ARRIVAL IN THIS BEAUTIFUL. HISTORIC CITY.

MR. PRESIDENT,

IT WAS IN 1984. A DECADE AGO, AT THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN MEXICO CITY, THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY URGED ALL GOVERNMENTS TO DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND HEALTH OF ALL WOMEN AND MEN, AND TO ACCELERATE THEIR EFFORTS FOR PROVIDING TO ALL A LIVELIHOOD, CONSONANT WITH FREEDOM AND DIGNITY AND CONDUCIVE TO PHYSICAL. MENTAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SPIRITUAL WELFARE.

DURING THESE PAST TEN YEARS THE CAUSE AND IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION DYNAMICS HAVE NEVER CEASED TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF CONCERN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, WHEREBY WE HAVE EXPERIENCED SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN UPHOLDING WHAT WAS AGREED UPON.

MR. PRESIDENT,

SINCE THE MEXICO CONFERENCE WE HAVE WITNESSED TREMENDOUS CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ARENA, AMONG WHICH THE END OF BIPOLARITY, THE EMERGENCE OF NEW STATES, THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE FORMING OF NEW ECONOMIC MEGA BLOCS.

DESPITE THESE CHANGES, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS FACED WITH GREAT CHALLENGES. WE STILL LIVE IN A WORLD BESET BY INEQUALITY AND GREAT

IMBALANCES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND RESOURCES, AND EXPERIENCE A CONTINUOUS DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. WHILE WE ARE GATHERED HERE, THE LIVES OF MORE THAN HALF OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION ARE DOMINATED BY UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ATTAINING DECENT LEVELS OF NUTRITION, HOUSING. EDUCATION AND HEALTH.

MR. PRESIDENT,

TODAY WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON ANOTHER CRUCIAL PROBLEM CONFRONTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THE WORLD POPULATION HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS, AND IS EXPECTED TO REDOUBLE IN THE NEXT 30 YEARS. THIS ENORMOUS GROWTH DEMANDS A SERIOUS ANALYSIS, AS WELL AS A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE CONSEQUENCES, GENERATED BY IT, SUCH AS MIGRATORY FLOWS, LARGE URBAN CONCENTRATIONS AND THE ENORMOUS DEMANDS CREATED IN THE AREAS OF NUTRITION, HOUSING, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION. THESE ARE ALL ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN-DEPTH DURING THIS CONFERENCE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS FOR THE ICPD AT SUBREGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL HAVE PRODUCED MANY VALUABLE PROPOSALS.

MY GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE RESULTS OF THE TWO LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MEETINGS, WHICH PRODUCED THE MEXICO DECLARATION AND THE PORT OF SPAIN DECLARATION- ON, ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK OF CONDITIONS THAT SHOULD BE MET IN ORDER TO END POVERTY, TO CREATE REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND TO GUARANTEE THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING, A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE, AND THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS TO THE PEOPLES OF OUR REGION.

I AM PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS THAT THESE GOALS CAN ONLY BE REACHED WHEN

THERE IS INCREASED AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO MOVE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SECONDARY POSITION IT NOW OCCUPIES TO THE FOREFRONT AND TO MAKE IT A PRINCIPAL AND PERMANENT CONCERN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

INDEED, MY GOVERNMENT UNDERLINES THE APPROACH THAT POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES ARE INTERRELATED. AND THAT THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO THE OVERALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

IN THIS RESPECT. MY GOVERNMENT SUBSCRIBES TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ARE THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY, AND THAT IN ESTABLISHING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS DUE ACCOUNT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE. TRADITIONS AND NATIONAL LAWS OF EACH COUNTRY.

MR. PRESIDENT.

THERE IS A GROWING COMMITMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION IN DEVELOPMENT. IT IS REGRETTABLE, THEREFORE, THAT IN THE PRESENT WORLD ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES THESE COUNTRIES FACE SERIOUS OBSTACLES IN FULFILLING THESE COMMITMENTS. BECAUSE THEY CANNOT FULLY CONTROL THEIR ECONOMIES.

SURINAM, LIKE MANY OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FACES SERIOUS OBSTACLES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITH A HUMAN AND SOCIAL DIMENSION. WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT MY GOVERNMENT IS PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ASPECTS OF MIGRATION, HEALTH CARE, GENDER EQUALITY. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND

ADOLESCENT FERTILITY.

MR. PRESIDENT,

MY COUNTRY EXPERIENCES. IN PARTICULAR, A HIGH LEVEL OF EMIGRATION OF YOUNG AND SKILLED PEOPLE. THIS "BRAIN DRAIN" CAUSES UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR A SUSTAINED SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, STANDARD OF LIVING AND DEVELOPMENT. POLICIES TO PROMOTE EMIGRATION OF NATIONALS IN ORDER TO END THE "BRAIN DRAIN" AND TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCES CREATED IN OUR SKILLED LABOR FORCE, SO FAR HAVE NOT MET THE EXPECTATIONS.

MY GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE GLOBAL DIMENSION OF MIGRATION PROBLEMS. THE INCREASE OF MIGRATIONS FROM THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO THE MORE PROSPEROUS COUNTRIES IS UNPRECEDENTED. MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD MAKE UP LEGIONS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING IMBALANCES BETWEEN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,

THEREFORE, WE CONSIDER IT VITAL TO UNDERTAKE CONCERTED ACTIONS AT THE NATIONAL SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL TO COPE WITH THE MIGRATION TENDENCIES

MR. PRESIDENT,

FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF ACTIVITIES IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE OBJECTIVES OF THE SURINAMESE GOVERNMENT. OUR APPROACH OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT. UNDERSCORES THEIR IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL POLITICAL AND CULTURAL PROCESS.

WE ARE. INDEED, OF THE VIEW THAT THE ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUITY, EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. AS WELL AS THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, THE GUARANTEEING OF WOMEN S RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, AND A FULL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ON ALL LEVELS. CONSTITUTE THE BASIC PILLARS OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. MOREOVER, THEY CAN FACILITATE THE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE COMMON GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

SURINAM ALSO RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION. ESPECIALLY FOR GIRLS AND FEMALE ADOLESCENTS, AS THERE IS PROOF THE WORLD OVER THAT THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF WOMEN HAS GREAT INFLUENCE ON THEIR APPROACH TO FAMILY PLANNING, ON THEIR SEXUAL BEHAVIOR. THEIR HEALTH CONDITION IN GENERAL. THEIR FIRST PREGNANCY. THE SPACING OF THEIR PREGNANCIES AND THE QUALITY OF THEIR PARENTHOOD.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAM IS OF THE OPINION THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS, ESPECIALLY THE POOREST STRATA, HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON AND ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING, AND SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES. THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS RIGHT COULD BE BEST GUARANTEED BY A POLICY WHICH INCREASINGLY MAKES SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND AFFORDABLE METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION AVAILABLE AND WHICH PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD, INCLUDING THE PREVENTION OF UNWANTED PREGNANCIES.

IN SURINAM, SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PLANNING. THE SURINAMESE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL REGIONAL AWARDS FOR ITS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PLANNING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES. THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND AND THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION HAVE

GIVEN VALUABLE SUPPORT TO PROGRAMS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, AND PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES IN THESE AREAS.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE BASIC HEALTH POLICY IN SURINAM IS IMPLEMENTED ON THE PREMISES THAT HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE. AFFORDABLE AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE POPULATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE. I AM PROUD TO STATE THAT 80 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION HAS ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES THROUGH THE STATE HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM.

MR. PRESIDENT,

ALTHOUGH POPULATION ISSUES IN SURINAM ARE NOT YET DEFINED IN TERMS OF AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK OF THE DIVERSE ASPECTS OF DEMOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT, IT IS THE INTENTION OF MY GOVERNMENT TO COME TO A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND TO ENSURE THAT POPULATION POLICIES ARE CLOSELY INCORPORATED IN ALL MULTI-ANNUAL AND SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS, TAKING DUE REGARD OF THE STRONG LINKAGES BETWEEN POPULATION, RESOURCES ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT, SINCE IT IS AWARE THAT BY PLACING THE HUMAN BEING IN THE CENTER A VITAL CONTRIBUTION CAN BE MADE TOWARDS OUR COMMON GOAL OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. AS SUCH. SPECIAL EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO COUNTER-BALANCE THE IMPACTS OF THE STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM, CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTED IN MY COUNTRY. ON THE LIVING STANDARDS OF OUR PEOPLE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

FINALLY, MY GOVERNMENT UNDERLINES ITS SUPPORT TO THE LONG-TERM, WELL-BALANCED UNIVERSAL PROGRAM OF ACTION, BASED ON THE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY THOSE EFFORTS WHICH PROMOTE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EQUITABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT IS IRREVOCABLY COMMITTED TO THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATING THE PROGRAM OF ACTION IN OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND PROGRAM. WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE PROGRAM OF ACTION WILL INDEED HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT. NOT ONLY ON THE PEOPLE LIVING TODAY, BUT ESPECIALLY ON THE FUTURE GENERATIONS.

MR. PRESIDENT.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMMENSE POTENTIAL THAT GOOD WILL AND DETERMINATION CAN OFFER TO THE GENUINE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOALS OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT. THE LACK OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT HAS TOO OFTEN IN HISTORY CREATED SERIOUS HUMAN NEGLECT.

IN THIS LIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THIS CONFERENCE REPRESENTS A MAJOR TEST BOTH OF THE POLITICAL WILL OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND OF THE CAPACITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND COORDINATION OF A PROGRAM WHICH AIMS AT BRINGING ABOUT REAL AND CREATIVE CHANGES IN THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THIS CONFERENCE WILL FORM A MILESTONE IN OUR COMMON PURSUIT TO BRING JOY AND HAPPINESS AND TO CREATE A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR OUR PEOPLES.

THANK YOU. MR. PRESIDENT.

For further information, please contact: popin@undp.org
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