



## 94-09-08: Statement of Ukraine, H.E. Mr. Ivan F. Kouras

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from Russian

Statement

by H.E. Mr. Ivon F. Kouras,  
Vice-Prime Minister of Ukraine  
Head of the Ukrainian Delegation  
to the International Conference  
on Population and Development

September 8, 1994.

Cairo, Egypt

Dear Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the first time in the history of independent Ukraine our delegation participates in the International Conference on Population and Development. We are thankful to H.E. Mr. Mohammed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as to Mrs. Nafis Sadik and to the UN Secretariat for creating favourable conditions of work on the joint Programme of Action in the field of population on the eve of the third millennium, on this historic soil of ancient Egypt.

There are no universal methods of solving the demographic problems, the methods that could be applied to all countries without any exception. And we think that it is impossible to elaborate such methods. Economy and ecology, education and employment, religion, law and housing problems are inseparably interrelated in this domain. That is the reason why any government has its own way in solving these problems, relying on the achieved level of economic and social development and existing traditions. Despite that, three latest International Conferences on Population have gathered the representatives of practically all countries of the world which is a testimony to the unremitting necessity of coordination of efforts in order to solve the global demographic problems.

We are happy to state that after the transition from confrontation to mutual understanding and co-operation the constructive dialogue in all spheres of life became the imperative need of the international relations. The United Nations plays a leading role in the comprehension of many acute problems of which the problems of population and

development are of top priority. In recent years, the U.N. has been transformed into the universal centre of policy co-ordination for its member-states. The Ukrainian delegation supports this role of the U.N. and pays tribute to the consolidating activity of its Secretary-General Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The documents adopted in Bucharest and Mexico laid the basis for the united actions of all countries towards finding the solution of problems of population and development. We are sure that the Cairo Conference will open a new page in the history of mankind in the name of the present and the future.

Mr. President,

I would like to cite some figures that characterize Ukraine of today. The population of my country is more than 52 million people. Our state is a multinational country inhabited by more than 100 nationalities. The average length of life is 69 years. The level of birth rate is 11 people per 1000, the death rate is 14 people per 1000.

Recognizing the tremendous importance of the world problems of demographic development and the joint targets of the world community in this sphere, we would like to draw your attention to the specific character of the demographic situation existing in our country. We think that we have common problems with some other countries that are living through a transitional period. The particularities of this situation require the elaboration of adequate demo-political solutions.

The specific character of the demographic situation lies in the fact that we face the process of deterioration of reproduction of population aggravated by the economic crisis of recent years.

The most drastic problem which causes utmost our concern is the deterioration of ecological situation. The environmental problems, as it was noted at the International Conference in Rio-de-Janeiro, can not be solved through separate actions of any individual country. All regions of the world should co-operate in this process. This coordination is of utmost importance for us with the the Chernobyl disaster which is the biggest technological catastrophe of the XXth century.

In this context we should not forget the deadly consequences of this catastrophe and its influence on the demographic processes. The scope of this disaster can be compared with the aftermath of the Second World War. By the way, Ukraine suffered tremendous losses in this war and even now, 50 years after the war, we suffer from its "second demographic echo". The Chernobyl disaster caused the deformation of the demographic behaviour of many families, it is a long-term factor causing deterioration of the population's health and its increased mortality.

The real scope of this catastrophe exceeds any preliminary assessments of its consequences, both economic, social, demographic, medical, psychological and others. It should be noted that today the number of people living in the contaminated zone exceeds several hundreds of thousands of people.

The economic crisis and the extraordinary ecological situation caused an acute demographic crisis that means not only the absence of natural growth of the population but also the decrease of its quality characteristics, in particular, health.

With great concern we note that the birth rate in 1993 was the lowest in

our history. The number of childless families and families with one child is growing. As a result, birth rate guarantees only 79 % replacement of the former generation by the forthcoming one. It means that we witness the narrowing of population reproduction below zero level.

The problem of normalization of the processes of formation and use of labor potential of the population is one of the most important problems. In this context special attention is paid to the regulation of rural and external migration as well as to the problems connected with the repatriation of the peoples which were deported by the former totalitarian regime. In particular, I mean the Crimean Tartars.

The emigrational potential is fluctuating now within 2-6 % of the country's population. According to existing estimates, 120 thousand of Ukrainian citizens were working last year in the European countries . External migration is growing and causes negative social and economic consequences in our country and concern in the countries of entry. In these conditions the problem of regulation of international migration becomes more and more pressing. In particular, it concerns labour migration, the problem which may be solved on the basis of intergovernmental agreements providing for the restriction of the number of emigrants and the legal protection of the labour migrants' rights.

The demographic policy of the state is aimed at creating conditions which would allow women to combine effectively labour activities with family duties. It includes financial support of motherhood and childhood, maternity leaves and development of preschool facilities. It provides, in particular, for the maternity benefits for children that are channeled directly to the families. Social policy is becoming more target-oriented and takes into account the specific characteristics of

the different groups of the population.

We regard the improvement of labour and domestic conditions, ecology, medical service, protection of motherhood and childhood, treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction, prevention of AIDS disease as well as enhancement of the sanitary and medical culture as top priorities in our health protection policy.

In its family planning policy our government proceeds from that every family determines by itself the number of its children and intervals between their births. The state believes that its role is to create necessary conditions for making the choice possible. We are concerned, like other countries, that the childbirth regulation is being exercised now mainly with the help of artificial abortion.

Abortion does great harm to the woman's health and results in other negative population consequences. But its prohibition now, in the conditions of insufficient supply of effective contraceptives, would evoke more negative consequences in connection with the inevitable growth of illegal abortions. We believe that an access to contraceptives, adequate medical assistance and information, as it is envisaged by the draft Programme of Action of our Conference, is an alternative to the abortion.

The existing differentiation of countries as to the spread of the practice of abortion calls for alterations in the use of resources of the UN Population Fund. That should be done with due regard for specific situation in different regions and countries.

Mr. President,

Every country is responsible for the state of its social and economic development. United Nations' efforts and international assistance are to facilitate the establishment of a mechanism of solution of population problems. UN has to remain the universal organization acting in the interests of all member-states including the countries with transitional economics.

The delegation of Ukraine, after a thorough study of the drafts of the final documents of the Conference, approves them as a whole. The adoption of these documents will signify the achievement of a new global consensus, will provide an economic, legal and organizing basis for long-term international co-operation in the field of population and development.

Thank you.

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