



## **94-09-09: Statement of Marshall Isl., H.E. Mr. Tom D. Kijiner**

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AS WRITTEN

THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT

BY

THE HONORABLE TOM D. KIJINER

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

05 - 13 SEPTEMBER 1994

CAIRO, EGYPT

MR. PRESIDENT

MADAME SECRETARY GENERAL

FELLOW DELEGATES

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN MY REMARKS BY EXPRESSING THE GRATITUDE OF

THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS DELEGATION TO EVERYONE WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS CONFERENCE: TO YOU, MR. PRESIDENT FOR FACILITATING OUR DELIBERATION OF ISSUES OF GREAT COMPLEXITY; TO ALL OF THE GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE BROUGHT SUCH A HIGH DEGREE OF ACUMEN AND CONCERN TO THESE PROCEEDINGS; TO PRESIDENT MUBARAK, THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF EGYPT FOR THEIR WARM HOSPITALITY IN THIS BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC CITY; TO DR. SADIK AND HER STAFF AT THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEARS OF PREPARATORY WORK THEY HAVE DEVOTED TO THIS CONFERENCE. THANKS TO YOUR PERSONAL DEDICATION, THE DELIBERATIONS OF THIS CONFERENCE WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING BENEFITS FOR THE PEOPLES OF OUR EARTH.

I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO THE UNFPA FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED WHICH MADE OUR Participation AT THIS CONFERENCE POSSIBLE

IT IS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE THAT THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHOULD CONVENE IN EGYPT--THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS AND THE BIRTHPLACE OF MOSES--FOR IT WAS FROM THIS "CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION" THAT ONE GROUP OF PEOPLE BEGAN TO REACH OUT TO OTHERS. FROM THIS STARTING POINT, THROUGH A LONG HISTORY OF EXPLORATION AND COMMERCE, PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE EARTH CAME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY SHARE THIS PLANET WITH OTHER NATIONS. WE HAVE BEEN DRAWN BACK TO Egypt TO FORMULATE A PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF OUR PLANET AND ALL ITS PEOPLE.

I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PARTICIPATE TO SUCH A LARGE EXTENT IN DRAFTING OF THE "DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION" AND IN THE

DELIBERATIONS HERE IN CAIRO. IN PACIFIC ISLAND SOCIETIES AND OTHER SMALL ISLAND STATES, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, THE QUALITY OF LIFE IS MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED BY THE RECONCILIATION OF POPULATION PRESSURES WITHIN THE LIMITS OF DEVELOPMENT. FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, THE VIABILITY OF PACIFIC ISLAND SOCIETIES HAD DEPENDED UPON A DELICATE BALANCE OF OUR POPULATION AND OUR RESOURCES. UNTIL CONTACT WITH WESTERN CIVILIZATION, THE PEOPLES OF THE PACIFIC HAD SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING SUCH A BALANCE. STABLE POPULATIONS LIVED WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PRE-CONTACT ERA WAS ALSO A TIME OF SEVERE RESTRAINTS ON HUMAN FULFILLMENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE PACIFIC ISLAND SOCIETIES OF JUST A FEW GENERATIONS AGO SERVE AS A MODEL--AT LEAST A THEORETICAL MODEL--OF A SOCIETY LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

WHATEVER BALANCE EXISTED IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, IT WAS THROWN OFF BY THE INTRUSION OF THE MODERN WORLD. THE ISLANDS NO LONGER ENJOYED THE PROTECTION OF ISOLATION. THE EFFECT OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCES WAS IMMEDIATE AND PROFOUND. THE PEOPLES OF THE PACIFIC BEGAN TO BENEFIT FROM MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND TO DEVELOP INTO MODERN NATION STATES. BUT WE ALSO RECEIVED MUCH THAT WAS HARMFUL. WITHIN A FEW YEARS OF INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE WORLD BEYOND THEIR HORIZONS, MANY PACIFIC ISLANDERS DIED FROM DISEASES FROM WHICH THEY HAD NO IMMUNITY: THE DISEASES OF CHILDHOOD SUCH AS MEASLES AND MUMPS AND CHICKEN POX. WE STILL REMAIN VULNERABLE TO EVERY STRAIN OF FLU BROUGHT TO THE ISLANDS BY TRAVELERS. PERHAPS THE MOST TERRIFYING SPECTER FACING THE PACIFIC TODAY IS THE THREAT OF HIV/AIDS INFECTION. ALREADY IT IS BRINGING TRAGIC DEATH TO OUR ISLANDS. THREE WEEKS AGO, I DELIVERED A RADIO ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS ABOUT AIDS. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION IS FORTHRTGHT

IN ITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEALING WITH THIS DREAD DISEASE

THE SOCIAL SITUATION ADDRESSED IN THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION IS AS WELL SUITED FOR PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS AS IT IS FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WHILE THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES, FOR THE MOST PART, ARE AT AN EARLY STAGE IN THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION, THE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR CHANGING POPULATIONS ARE WELL DESCRIBED IN THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION. THESE PATTERNS OF CHANGE BECAME ESPECIALLY PRONOUNCED IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY. THERE HAS BEEN AN OVERWHELMING TIDE OF URBAN MIGRATION; PEOPLE WHO WERE DRAWN TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND MODERN AMENITIES ARE NOW FINDING THAT THEY CANNOT SUPPORT THEMSELVES AS WELL AS THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO IN THEIR PREVIOUS RURAL SUBSISTENCE LIFE-STYLE. AT THE SAME TIME, IMPROVED HEALTH CARE HAS REDUCED INFANT MORTALITY AND ADDED MANY YEARS TO THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF OUR PEOPLE. WHILE OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES HAVE FOUND A "SAFETY VALVE" IN LARGE OUT MIGRATION TO THE METROPOLITAN COUNTRIES ALONG THE PACIFIC RIM. MY OWN COUNTRY HAS EXPERIENCED RAPID POPULATION GROWTH.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS HAS THE DISTINCTION OF HAVING ONE OF THE HIGHEST POPULATION GROWTH RATES IN THE WORLD--OF ABOUT 4% PER ANNUM. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE BIRTH RATE IS NOW BEGINNING TO SUBSIDE, A GREAT DEAL OF PLANNING AND RESOLVE WILL BE NEEDED TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF THE MARSHALLESE PEOPLE. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS HAS ESTABLISHED A NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL

TO FORMULATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCOMMODATING

POPULATION ISSUES. STATISTICIANS WITHIN THE HEALTH MINISTRY AND THE NATIONAL PLANNING OFFICE ARE ENABLING US TO INTEGRATE POPULATION ISSUES INTO THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. BY ESTABLISHING A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ACCOMMODATING THE PRESSURES OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION COULD MAKE A VITALLY IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO MY COUNTRY.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS STRONGLY ENDORSES THE "PROGRAMME OF ACTION". WE HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF MEETING THE QUANTITATIVE GOALS OF THE "PROGRAM": WE ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON AN AMBITIOUS RESTRUCTURING OF OUR NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM IN A PRIMARY HEALTH CARE MODEL THAT WILL EMPHASIZE PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND CARE FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN. EFFECTIVE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WILL ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF OUR ISLANDS HAVE ADEQUATE WATER, NUTRITION, AND SANITATION. ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES WILL BE AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE. IN ADDITION, FOR MANY YEARS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS HAS ADMINISTERED THE SAME PUBLIC SERVICES TO WOMEN AND MEN AND PROVIDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN; WE HAVE LONG RECOGNIZED THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND THE STATUS OF HEALTH CARE IN A SOCIETY. ALTHOUGH MY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PLEASED TO ENDORSE THE " DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION" AS IT NOW STANDS, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN ACTION PLAN THAT EVERY NATION CAN AGREE TO, A PLAN THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE DIVERSITY OF OUR CIVILIZATIONS AND CULTURES AND TAKES INTO ACCOUNT OUR DIFFERING STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION. AS OTHER SPEAKERS HAVE OBSERVED, WE HAVE ALREADY REACHED A REMARKABLE CONSENSUS ON MOST FEATURES OF THIS VERY SPECIFIC 20 - YEARS PROGRAM. IT IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE THAT THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH CAN AGREE TO THE PRINCIPLES PROCLAIMED IN CHAPTER II OF THE PROGRAM. AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY, MANKIND IS FINDING SUBSTANTIAL

AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL VALUES BASED UPON THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON. THE “ DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION “ ASSERTS OUR CONFIDENCE IN HUMANITY AND OUR PROFOUND HOPE FOR A FUTURE OF LIBERTY AND ORDER AND PROSPERITY. OUR AGREEMENT HAS BEEN DETERMINED-- NOT BY THE COERCION OF POWER POLITICS-- BUT AS FREELY GIVEN EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE NATIONS WE REPRESENT. DESPITE OUR SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT, WE MUST RESPECT ONE ANOTHER'S DIFFERENCES,

MR. PRESIDENT, THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS WOULD BE PLEASED TO SUPPORT A “ PROGRAMME OF ACTION” THAT ENCOMPASSES ALL THOSE POINTS ON WHICH WE CAN REACH CONSENSUS. THE OBJECTIVES ON WHICH WE AGREE ARE OF SUCH FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE THAT WE CANNOT ALLOW THE POINTS OVER WHICH WE DIFFER TO DEFEAT THIS FARREACHING PLANNING DOCUMENT. IT IS MY HOPE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WILL REMEMBER THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AS ANOTHER STARTING POINT FROM WHICH THE PEOPLE'S OF THE EARTH AGREED UPON A PLAN OF ACTION TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE GROWTH OF POPULATION.

THANK YOU AND KOMOOL TATA.

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