



94-09-09: Statement of Niue, H.E. Mr. Sani Lakatani

ISO: NIU

The electronic preparation of this document has been done by the
Population Information Network(POPIN) of the United Nations Population
Division in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme

AS WRITTEN

SPEECH AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ICPD), CAIRO

BY HON SANI ELIA LAKATANI

(Head of Niue Delegation)

FRIDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1994

Mr President, Excellencies, Distinguish Heads of Delegations,

Representatives of Non-Government Organisations, UNFPA

Secretariat, ICPD Organising Committee,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a privilege to be part of this world forum, the
International Conference on Population and Development, bringing
together and putting together a collection of global views and concerns
for the betterment of the human race. I and my delegation associate

ourselves with the previous speakers in thanking our host country, Egypt, for providing the venue and committing resources for a successful conference.

My delegation comes from a tiny Pacific Island State, Niue believed to be the largest high coral island in the world, but indeed the smallest self-governing state in the world. Being small does not necessarily connote that we have lesser problems to address. We believe in playing our part, however small, in the affairs of the world. For we are a part of the world family, and subsequently do not exist in isolation.

Historically, my country was annexed by Great Britain in 1900 and a year later handed to New Zealand to administer as a part of the British Empire. The annexation and the subsequent administration transplanted outside values which my people have come to accept as their own. Although my country achieved a status of a self-governing nation in 1974 in free association with the former administration, the bond established over seventy years of colonisation remains our link with the outside world.

Seventy years of external rule with imperial values has bred a people totally dependent on its government to provide for their every need.

The challenge before my Government, is therefore, not so much as to try to reverse the ingrained dependency, but to encourage partnership in all decision-making and development.

My Government is conscious of the global concerns over rapid population growth, the over-exploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation, and the issue of equal rights. I am pleased to report, that these concerns are being addressed by my Government. External agencies

and organisations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, WHO, UNESCO, ESCAP and the Pacific regional agencies are assisting my country in the implementation of population related programmes, focussing on reproductive health and family planning, education, socio-economic and environment issues. With all this assistance, Niue is indeed kept in touch with the world at large.

No two countries are the same, nor are the magnitude of problems similar, but the experience of successes and failures are nevertheless symptomatic of a changing world. Reform for the better comes in different forms and kinds. For my little country, small as it is, our aspiration is to create and maintain a living community. To follow a commitment of a partnership with the private sector in creating a sustainable self-reliant community united within the framework of a dynamic economy whilst recognising the valuable contribution of the environment and cultural values. For the world today is going through a period of structural re-adjustments in a drive to achieve social and sustainable economic development. As so is Niue.

Mr. President,

My Government is currently undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of Niue's potential for achieving long-term sustainable economic and human development. Following a successful round of grassroots meetings between the Population and Development Committee and Niuean Villagers. It is proposed that a strategy be adopted that involves all communities as partners in the development of the Principles yet to be endorsed in the Programme of Action of this Conference.

Our goal as alluded to, is to work towards achieving a manageable population size by the year 2,000, as well as stepping out of the

shadows of our former administration if we are to establish a recognisable international profile. Our situation today is by no means economically satisfactory. My Island state is, like all other developing countries, very much dependent on external assistance for development. For the immediate future, this situation will not significantly change, nor our aspirations for a self-reliant nation become a reality. It is for this reason that developed countries are asked to maintain and to increase their level of financial and technical assistance to my country.

Mr President, I and my delegation would like to acknowledge with our sincere gratitudes to the countries such as USA, Japan, Norway, U.K. and many others who have pledged to increase their annual contributions towards this world human development. We are all committed to making a today that is better than yesterday, a today that is appropriate for today, and a tomorrow that is better than today, for our sakes, for women, the children and their children.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.

For further information, please contact: popin@undp.org
POPIN Gopher site: <gopher://gopher.undp.org/11/ungophers/popin>
POPIN WWW site: <http://www.undp.org/popin>