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AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF
 FREE TRADE UNIONS (IECFTU) TO THE UNITED NATIONS
 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT
 CAIRO, 5 - 13 SEPTEMBER, 1994

I take this opportunity to thank the chair for permitting me to present
 the trade union view on the subject of population on behalf of the
 International Confederation of Free Trade unions. The ICFTU representst
 120 million workers in 124 countries and territories.

We believe that the trade union movement has a lot to share with this
 gathering on the principles of population policy and the ways trade
 unions can contribute to population and development. The following are
 our main areas of concern.

1. The importance of involving trade unions in population programme.

The work place should be the focus of population actions, and here trade unions have a key role. The majority of people in the world spend much of their working lives at their place of work. It is the centre of many peoples' social lives, the place they engage in discussions and where their peer group is. Consequently, in order to affect people's actions on a matter such as family planning, the role of the workplace is paramount. Education programmes can reach larger numbers of people if run in the workplace than probably any other way. Within the workplace, workers' own freely chosen organizations, their trade unions, fulfil a vital function. In many countries, unions could be an important vehicle for the carrying out of educational activities - indeed, many unions have a wealth of experience in adult education methods. Unions could undertake to educate workers on family planning /population issues as many unions are already doing so. Consequently the UN programme of action should render to the importance of trade union involvement and to the respect of the rights of free trade unions. In particular, the final chapters of the UN. report, covering national and international actions, non-governmental actors and follow-up, all need to devote much more attention to the workplace and to trade unions.

2. Importance of women in population programmes

Empowering women is the key to solving population problems; and success in population policy depends more than anything else on the role of women. Empowering women means extending choices; choices about if and when to get married, choices about education, employment opportunities, controlling the social and physical environment; choices about if and when to get pregnant and ultimately about family size. Experience shows

that given the choice of active control over their own fertility, women will improve their own health, limit the number of children in their families and thus help in achieving balanced population growth.

3. The need for good treatment of migrant workers

The reference in the UN draft programme of action to migrant workers are at present extremely good. Unions are in full agreement with the basic approach in the chapter, proposing that conditions need to be improved in the countries of origin of migrant workers so as to eliminate the pressure to migrate and that in the countries of destination, documented migrants be accorded equal treatment. Trade unions are extremely active in organizing migrant workers and representing their interests and reference to unions is needed. However, the UN should make explicit reference to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. At the same time the ILO Conventions most relevant to migrant workers need to be ratified and respected, including Convention 97 on Migration for Employment, Convention 118 on Equality of Treatment (Social Security), Convention 143 on Migration in Abusive Conditions and Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers and Convention 157 on Maintenance of Social Security Rights .

4. The need to emphasize Basic education

We join voices with previous speakers who have emphasized on the role of education in enhancing women's capacity and social power. In addition to the obvious benefits of providing a better education to one half of the human race, educating women can have beneficial effects on population

growth. Education influences the number of children a woman wants and the number she bears. It is therefore important for women and girls to have equal access to formal schooling. It is therefore important for women and girls to have equal access to formal schooling. It is also important to note that success in population policies will be closely linked to a major effort by governments to extend education opportunities beyond urban centres to all members of the population. International assistance should give priority to assisting in the provision of this basic need.

5 The importance of poverty reduction and employment creation

The key to the reduction of poverty in all countries is the provision of more employment. The consequence of the present rapid rise in population is an increasing number of entrants onto the job markets, at a rate considerably faster than the creation of new employment opportunities. The programme of action should include a serious consideration of how to provide more jobs. It should take into account both international and National measures including public works schemes, community development activities and incentives to hire workers ~ well as training and education.

Honourable chairperson, once again, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak and I hope the final programme of action of the UN on Population and Development will include some if not all of our humble concerns.