



## **94-09-12: Statement of UNFPA, Mr. Joseph van Arendonk**

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AS WRITTEN

Statement

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(Check Against Delivery)

A week ago, thousands of us came to Cairo to improve the world. We gave  
 ourselves nine days to do so. We came with a 113-page draft Programme of  
 Action that was to serve as a blueprint for action for the next 20  
 years.

We will leave Cairo with a powerful Programme of Action. The forces for

change. and the commitment of nations to such change, are too strong not to.

But such changes will not come automatically, or quickly, or easily. They will not come about simply because the Programme of Action says they should, no matter how powerful or inspirational it is.

No. Change will come about only if we -- the international community -- muster the collective will and resolve to see that it does; only if we commit ourselves to do everything in our power to implement the Programme of Action; and only if we commit ourselves to mobilize the financial resources needed to support the actions called for in the Programme.

Mr. President,

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNFPA's operations. As a United Nations organization, UNFPA is committed to neutrality, universality, and national sovereignty. As a pioneer in the population and development field, and as the world's largest provider of multilateral population assistance, UNFPA has developed a comprehensive, multi-sectoral programme of assistance and built up a dedicated and effective headquarters and field staff to implement it.

During that 25-year period, UNFPA has received nearly \$3 billion in voluntary contributions from a total of 164 donors. The Fund is extremely grateful to all those donors who have supported the UNFPA programme throughout the years, and is particularly gratified that several of its major donors have recently indicated that they will substantially increase their contributions in future years.

As a result of these generous contributions, UNFPA now provides support to 141 countries, including 44 in sub-Saharan Africa, 39 in Asia and the Pacific, 33 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 25 in the Arab States region and Europe.

About half of UNFPA's assistance is used for maternal and child health care and family planning. Another 18 per cent is allocated to related information, education and communication (IEC) activities. The Fund also provides support for population data collection and analysis, research on demographic and socioeconomic relationships, and population policy formulation and evaluation

UNFPA has found this integrated approach to be the most effective way of helping countries address their population needs. The collection and analysis of data is a fundamental first step in gaining an understanding of the magnitude of that need. Research sharpens the focus and helps identify critical areas requiring assistance. Both activities provide valuable input into the formulation of a comprehensive and focused population policy and programme.

Least developed countries have been a special focus of UNFPA's support, and they make up a large portion of the Fund's priority countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The aim is to concentrate UNFPA assistance in the countries that have the Greatest need for it.

UNFPA closely monitors and evaluates all the projects it supports. It conducts annual and mid-term reviews of every project and makes use of outside experts to conduct independent in-depth evaluations. These evaluations serve three purposes: they ensure accountability to those who provide UNFPA's resources; they help the Fund to make more efficient

and effective use of those resources; and they provide valuable feedback to help improve programmes and projects .

The Fund has been a pioneer in bringing high-quality technical support closer to the countries it serves, through the establishment of UNFPA Country Support Teams. The teams among other things, focus on building up national capacity and strengthening national institutions -- two areas that will become even more important as countries begin to implement the Cairo Programme of Action.

UNFPA also makes considerable use of NGOs, both for substantive insights and for operational expertise. A particular challenge in this regard has been to devise innovative ways to encourage countries to work with NGOs at the local level.

A distinguishing feature of the UNFPA programme has been its strong support for South- South cooperation. This has accounted for a great deal of the success that many countries have had in their population programmes. UNFPA will therefore build upon these successful experiences and continue to play a lead role in this area.

Mr. President,

UNFPA is well poised within the UN system to play a leading role in the field of population and development. It has a well-defined mandate and a wealth of experience in carrying out that mandate. The Fund has worked closely with its partner organizations to improve coordination and undertake joint programming activities, to harmonize programme cycles and to streamline policies and procedures.

Over the past year-and-a-half, UNFPA has sought to build upon the solid base of existing family planning programmes and to provide family planning services within the broader framework of reproductive health care services. In so doing, the Fund has found that family planning programmes work best when they are linked to reproductive health services and when women are fully involved in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of such services.

During this same period, the Fund has also intensified its efforts to satisfy women and men's unmet needs for modern family planning services and to help improve the status of women. It has done so by improving the quality and extending the outreach of such services and by strongly supporting efforts to expand literacy programmes and educational opportunities, especially for girls and women. Both these activities have been indispensable in giving women greater choice and greater voice.

UNFPA has also undertaken activities aimed at enhancing women's economic status and exploring the linkages between women's economic activities and their reproductive behaviour. Such activities are extremely important because a woman's ability to earn income helps to create alternatives to early marriage and early and frequent child-bearing. They also heighten a woman's self-esteem and enhance her ability to make her own decisions, including those concerning child-bearing and contraception,

UNFPA has continuously sought to strengthen and refine its programming process, focusing on strategic programming and its requisite policy and technical assistance. The aim has been to develop the Fund's capacity to adapt to new challenges and demands, as well as to improve the effectiveness of the assistance the Fund provides.

Mr. President,

I mention these institutional and programme highlights as a way of acquainting this conference with UNFPA's extensive experience in the field of population and development and the unique skills and qualifications it brings to the follow up of the Cairo Programme of Action. As so many speakers have so eloquently noted, the ICPD is a defining moment in the population and development field. It is thus an integral part of the series of conferences that address important dimensions of development: environment and development in Rio de Janeiro; population and development in Cairo; social development in Copenhagen; and women in development in Beijing. The ICPD, and its historic Programme of Action, have once and for all placed population firmly, and rightly, in the middle of the development dialogue.

The ICPD is also a historic turning point for UNFPA. And, of course, the Fund has had a close association with it. But we must remember that the Cairo Programme of Action is the property of all countries. It therefore requires the concerted and coordinated efforts of all countries, developed and developing alike, and of 11 organizations active in the field of population and development, whether international, national or bilateral, or governmental, non- governmental or private.

But the Programme of Action cannot accomplish anything unless it has the resources to do so. It is through you, Mr. President, that I therefore appeal to all those participating in this historic conference to take this message back to their Governments. With our collective resolve and support, and with the commitment of adequate resources to back up that resolve, the Cairo Programme of Action will be a powerful strategy to

help improve the quality of people's lives and to ensure that each country will be able to meet its own population and development challenges.

Mr. President,

I am confident that, 20 years from now, our brief stay in Cairo will be well remembered as nine days that helped change the world we live in.

UNFPA is proud to have been a part of it.

Thank you.

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