



## **94-09-13: Statement of Family Planning Assoc India, Mrs. Avabai Wadia**

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AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT

FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF INDIA presented by

MRS. AVABAI B. WADIA

President

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and  
 Gentlemen,

At the outset, may I, on behalf of the Family Planning Association of  
 India, and on my own behalf, express our deep appreciation and thanks to  
 the President and people of this ancient and great country for their  
 magnificent arrangements and generous hospitality for this Conference.

We would also like to pay tribute to the dynamism and hard work of Dr.

Nafis Sadik and her colleagues; and we thank you Mr. President, for this opportunity to express some of our views at this great gathering of the nations of the world.

We are the oldest and largest non-governmental organization in India, working in the field of family planning and allied subjects and one of the oldest in the whole of Asia.

We approach the questions of population, development and environment in a holistic manner, understanding that each impinges on and deeply influences the others, and that they must be dealt with in a synergistic manner to achieve the ultimate goal of a better life for all, with justice and equity.

Behind every problem we see the faces of people, and we are convinced that when the people's needs and perspectives are understood and they are enthused and activated, problems can turn into opportunities.

To this end, we conduct activities not only for family planning and contraception on the basis of voluntary, free and informed choice; but carry on a multifaceted programme such as basic health for all, mother and child care, family planning, and programmes for gender equity and empowering women including literacy, education, income generation, as also for youth (who constitute more than 42% of our population), where education in population dynamics, human sexuality and responsible parenthood are of immediate importance.

In these endeavours, we are conscious of our ancient cultural values of tolerance and inherent respect for all. We value family life, not merely as a unit of social organization, but as a way of hum. development, and

we bring to it a new and heightened consciousness of individual rights and self-fulfillment, in which gender equality is an integral part.

The activities of the Association for the past few years have, therefore, anticipated in some ways the new directions in which this conference at Cairo will provide guidance to the global movement for population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Therefore, we strongly endorse the forward steps being taken by this Conference and among them the following:

1) We believe that programmes for poverty alleviation, social development, population stabilization and an equitable use of resources by nations and people, are of paramount importance.

2) The empowerment of women and gender equality and equity are of vital concern and must permeate all political, economic and social measures. We understand gender equality not in an adversarial sense, but as leading to human rights for all men and women, on a basis of equal rights and responsibilities.

3) Health for all, at all stages of life, includes sexual and reproductive health and family planning. In this respect, those who are, are present under-served, must receive priority.

4) The partnership that is being forged between Government and NGOs is a unique departure in global as well as national consultations, and we express the hope that the pace at which this is being done -- which is very slow in some instances -- can be accelerated through the stimulus generated by this Conference. The world scene is rapidly changing, where the exclusive is giving way to the universal. The NGO phenomenon

represents a part of this trend.

We urge all nationals to work actively for a balance between resource- and people, reducing wasteful over-consumerism on the one hand, and achieving stability in population growth on the other, in a truly global endeavour for healthy and sustainable economic and social systems, which can also reduce conflicts and lead to world peace.

To accomplish these and other fundamental goals, resources must be raised and can be raised, commensurate with capacity from all parts of the world - developing as well as developed. The affluent nations have a special responsibility to redress as soon as possible the one-sided world resource balance, in the interests of justice and equity.

We are standing at the threshold of the third millennium, when the world must no longer tolerate the division of people into the increasing billions living in dire poverty and want, and the affluent one billion. The ancient Sanskrit words have said it all in VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM -- the world is one family. Humankind is one, and all humans have the aspiration and responsibility to work together without distinction of race, caste, creed, religion or gender.

If this Conference can lead to such action, then it will have fully accomplished its ultimate goals.

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