

As written:



12th Februarv 1999

EU-Statement

*International Forum for the Operational Review and Appraisal of the
Implementation of the Programme of Action of the
International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) '94
The Hague, 08.- 12.02. 1999*

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, and I am taking the floor primarily in order to express our appreciation for the organizers and the hosts of this International Forum.

The week here in The Hague was time well spent and the International Forum, in our opinion, proved indeed to be an important step towards the Special Session in New York. The discussions in the Plenary and in the Main Committee provided a variety of useful insights into the achievements as well as the problems encountered in implementing the Cairo Programme of Action. Obviously, not every issue could be covered, but - after all - there should be some work left over for us to tackle in New York.

Special thanks are undoubtedly due to you. Mr President, as well as to Ambassador Chowdhury: Both of you, with the help of the Bureau, mastered the daunting task of giving us the major results of four days of an intensive exchange of views in a paper of not more than 38 pages. It makes it easy for me to resist the temptation of repeating here some of the points upon which the European Union places special importance. Let me stress that, while this is not a negotiated paper, it does provide a useful summary of issues. As such, the European Union will take note of the report in our deliberations in the lead up to the PrepCom.

The European Union hopes that our exchange of views with their manifold and varied experiences, which are reflected in these findings and proposed actions. will contribute to making the Secretary General's Report for the Special Session as concrete, action-oriented and operational as possible. Allow me to add. in this connection, our sincere wish that the Secretary General's report, which will form the basis for our negotiations in the near future, may be as **short and action-oriented as possible**, thus helping us to move the Cairo-process along from ICPD+5 to ICPD+10.

Let me conclude these brief remarks with heartfelt thanks to you, Dr. Sadik, and to your staff! In preparing for this Forum, but also here in The Hague we had many reasons to be grateful for the unflagging patience, helpfulness and good spirits which we encountered whenever we approached your people with some problem or other! Not least, this has contributed to the good atmosphere which characterized the International Forum and was conducive to the easy understanding experienced in all contacts with other delegations, NGO-representatives and other participants.