

As written:

**Statement by Kappa Yarka Leader of PNG
Delegation to ICPD Review Conference in The
Hague, Netherlands 8-12 February 1999**

Mr. President,
Executive Director UNFPA
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea I have the honor to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to conduct the proceedings of this very important Review Forum.

May I also through you, Mr. President, extend our gratitude and felicitation to the Government and people of The Netherlands for hosting this meeting and the kind hospitality extended to my Delegation.

Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik deserves to be commended by the international community for her foresight and outstanding leadership of UNFPA. We equally recognize the untiring positive contribution and partnership of other Development Agencies of the United Nations System.

Before I outline efforts undertaken by Papua New Guinea to implement some of the programs and activities, may I take this opportunity to convey the sincere apologies of my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Treasury and Planning, Honourable Iairo Lasaro who was expected to lead the National Delegation but could not avail himself due to his current Acting Prime Ministerial responsibilities. He has, however, expressed his wish for a successful outcome of this Forum and pledged his Government's support and commitment in the implementation of the ICPD POA.

Papua New Guinea, has made some progress in the implementation of the 1994 ICPD-POA but much is yet to be done.

The Government in collaboration with respective stakeholders such as Churches, NGOs and private sector is currently reviewing our National Population Policy which envisages to reflect changing local and global conditions and trends. The revised Policy is expected to be multi-sectoral in nature and scope and will be operational by April 1999.

I am pleased to inform you, Mr. President, that relevant policy guidelines, institutional capacity building initiatives and collation and analysis of appropriate data are in their progressive stages.

The Constitution of Papua New Guinea, Mr. President, recognizes gender equality and equity empowering women to be actively involved in all forms of political, social and economic activity for better quality of life

The Government established a Women's Division with the mandate of formulating policies and programs to address gender equality, equity, and empowerment of women.

And in 1991¹, Mr. President, the Government endorsed the National Women's Policy which is aimed at improving and increasing the position of women in our society, both as agents and beneficiaries in the development process. Other efforts have been made to promote women's participation in national development and decision-making vis-viz appointment of Departmental Heads and senior managers.

The National Department of Health in collaboration with other Government Agencies, private sector and civil society as well as donors, has prepared the Fourth National Health Plan 1996 – 2000 which encourages fundamental shift in the way health services are delivered to Papua New Guineans.

In implementing this Plan and consistent with the ICPD Program of Action, a number of initiatives have been initiated which among others include:

- a. sensitization of service providers on reproductive health, family planning and sexual health;
- b. training of service providers on safe motherhood;
- c. development and implementation of technical guidelines and standard;
- d. special skills training for those health workers dealing with reproductive health including family planning and sexual health;
- e. establishment of the National AIDS Council and its Secretariat;
- f. institutionalization of population education through curriculum development in our education system;
- g. integration of sexual health and family planning; development of IEC relating to population, reproductive health, family planning and sexual health;
- h. support for research in the area of reproductive health, family planning and sexual health;

Mr. President, Papua New Guinea has made concerted efforts in fostering and strengthening the partnership between Government, donors and civil society.

We support and recognize the traditional positive role of Churches in partnership with the Government in promoting and advancing development efforts of Papua New Guinea. They continue to support the Government in the delivery of health and education services for which the Government values this very special and on-going partnership.

In recognizing this very important partnership between the Churches and NGOs, the Government in 1995 endorsed a policy that gave legitimacy and recognition to the positive role of the NGOs as well as the continued positive role of the Churches in the delivery of health, educational and other social services. The Government stands ready to support and encourage this important on-going commitment.

Under this policy it encourages the NGO community to work together and share ideas and efforts that would promote sustainable development aimed at improving the living standards of our people.

Mr. President, although progress has been made in some areas, there continue to exist issues and problems which hinders and impedes our intentions and efforts in the effective implementation of the ICPD POA.

- a. The need to improve the capacity and effectiveness of formal institutional mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the national population program in the country. These institutions lack human, financial and technical resources.
- b. Gaps remain in terms of statistics and research required for integrated population and development planning. Data collected from censuses and surveys are not fully analyzed and disseminated to acceptable standards.
- c. Despite notable progress to date, gender inequality in the country continues to remain widespread. The national Gender related development Index shows that in every province, achievements of female in terms of life expectancy, income and education remain low.
- d. There still exist widespread inequality between males and females in terms of economic and political participation; and decision- making.
- e. The National Women's Policy and NGO Policy lack full publicity and implementation.
- f. Unacceptable high maternal, infant and child mortality rates need to be reduced to acceptable levels.
- g. There is need to address the reproductive health needs of men, young people and adolescents that were

previously overlooked under Maternal Child Health programs.

- h. The high prevalence of STD and HIV/AIDS related complications need to be seriously addressed, bearing in mind the quality aspects of care needed.
- i. There is need to provide technical and financial support to NGOs, Churches and the civil society to encourage their participation in population and development.
- j. There is a need to encourage the private sector to be more involved in implementing the Program of Action on reproductive health, family planning and sexual health.

Mr. President, some of the progress that we have made would not have been possible without external support and assistance. It is therefore fitting that I take this opportunity on behalf of the Government to express our appreciation and gratitude to UNFPA, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Australian Government and others who have been partners in this process.

In conclusion, Papua New Guinea wishes to reiterate that in order to effectively and successfully implement the good intentions of Cairo, international support and Co-operation **is a must**. Therefore, we welcome and support the call made during the Opening Session by the

Honorable Development Cooperation Minister of Netherlands challenging Governments “**to put their money where their mouth is**”. This we believe is an affirmative pronouncement that should generate coherent political will, commitment and leadership if the dreams and aspirations of Cairo are to be realized.

Thank you, Mr. President.