

Statement to the Hague Forum 8-12 February 1999

As written:

SURINAME

MR PRESIDENT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UNFPA.
DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATES AND GOVERNMENT, MINISTERS, LADIES
AND GENTLEMEN.

ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS
MY GRATITUDE TO THE UNFPA FOR ORGANIZING AND TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE NETHERLANDS FOR HOSTING THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

MR. PRESIDENT,
SINCE THE CAIRO-CONFERENCE WE HAVE SEARCH FOR MEANS AND WAYS FOR
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION.
WE ARE ALSO WITNESS OF DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THE
GLOBALIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE FORMING OF NEW
ECONOMIC MEGA BLOCKS. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES NEEDS OUR ATTENTION
MORE THAN EVER.

DESPITE THESE CHANGES, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS FACED WITH
GREAT CHALLENGES.

WE STILL LIVE IN A WORLD BESET BY INEQUALITY AND GREAT IMBALANCES
IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND RESOURCES.

WHILE WE ARE GATHERED HERE, THE LIVES OF MORE THAN HALF OF THESE
WORLD'S POPULATION IS DOMINATED BY- UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE
IMPOSSIBILITY OF ATTAINING DECENT LEVELS OF NUTRITION, HOUSING
EDUCATION AND HEALTH.

MR. PRESIDENT,
TODAY WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON ANOTHER CRUCIAL PROBLEM
CONFRONTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

THE WORLD POPULATION HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED OVER THE PAST
45 YEARS, AND IS EXPECTED TO REDOUBLE IN THE NEXT 25 YEARS.

THIS ENORMOUS GROWTH DEMANDS A SERIOUS ANALYSIS, AS WELL AS

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CAREFUL STUDY OF THE CONSEQUENCES, GENERATED BY IT, SUCH AS
MIGRATORY FLOWS, LARGE URBAN CONCENTRATIONS AND THE ENORMOUS
DEMANDS CREATED IN THE AREAS OF NUTRITION, HOUSING HEALTHCARE AND
EDUCATION.

MR. PRESIDENT,
THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS TO THE HAGUE FORUM HAVE PRODUCED MANY
VALUABLE PROPOSALS.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS WELCOMED THE RESULTS OF THE LATIN-AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN MEETINGS, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN A FRAMEWORK OF
CONDITIONS TO CREATE REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND TO
GUARANTEE THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STANDARD OF THE ENJOYMENT OF
HUMANRIGHTS

I AM PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS THAT THESE GOALS CAN ONLY BE REACHED
WHEN THERE IS INCREASED AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO MOVE THE
ECONOMIC AND THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT FROM THE
SECONDARY POSITION IT NOW OCCUPIES, TO THE FORE FRONT AND TO MAKE
IT A PRINCIPAL AND PERMANENT CONCERN OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY.

INDEED, **MY** GOVERNMENT UNDERLINES THE APPROACH THAT POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES ARE INTERRELATED, AND THAT THE FORMULATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS SHOULD BE
INTEGRATED INTO THE OVERALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING.

IN THIS RESPECT, MY GOVERNMENT SUBSCRIBES TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT
FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ARE THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY, AND THAT ESTABLISHING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS DUE ACCOUNT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE, TRADITIONS AND NATIONAL LAWS OF EACH COUNTRY.

MR. PRESIDENT,
THERE IS A GROWING COMMITMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IS OFTEN UNDER STRAIN DUE TO THE CURRENT WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION.

SURINAME, LIKE MANY OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, FACES SERIOUS OBSTACLES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITH A HUMAN AND SOCIAL DIMENSION.

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT MY GOVERNMENT IS PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ASPECTS OF MIGRATION, HEALTH CARE, GENDER EQUALITY, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND ADOLESCENT FERTILITY.

SINCE MANY YEARS MY COUNTRY EXPERIENCES, IN PARTICULAR, A HIGH LEVEL OF EMIGRATION OF YOUNG AND SKILLED PEOPLE.

THIS "BRAIN DRAIN" CAUSES UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR A SUSTAINED SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, STANDARD OF LIVING AND DEVELOPMENT.

POLICIES TO PROMOTE REMIGRATION OF NATIONALS IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THIS "BRAIN DRAIN" AND TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCES CREATED IN OUR SKILLED LABOR FORCE, SO FAR HAVE NOT YET MET THE EXPECTATIONS.

MR. PRESIDENT,
FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF ACTIVITIES IS ONE
OF THE PRINCIPLE OBJECTIVES OF THE SURINAMESE GOVERNMENT.
OUR APPROACH OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT, UNDERSCORES
THEIR IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND
CULTURAL PROCESS.

WE ARE, INDEED, OF THE VIEW THAT THE ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER
EQUITY, EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, AS WELL AS THE
ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, THE GUARANTEEING OF
WOMEN'S RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, AND A FULL
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ON ALL LEVELS CONSTITUTE THE
BASIC PILLARS OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS ON THE FIELD OF
GENDER EQUALITY, EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.

IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION THE BEIJING
"PLATFORM FOR ACTION" THE GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED AN INTENSIVE
SCHEME WITH ARUBA AND THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLIES.

AT THE SAME TIME REGIONAL COOPERATION HAS BEEN STRENGTHEN, NAMELY
IN RELATION TO THE CARICOM "PLAN OF ACTION" IN WHICH
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN ALL ASPECTS HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS
ONE OF THE MAJOR GOALS.

IT IS WORTHWHILE TO MENTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME HAS
EMBARKED UPON AN ALL ENCOMPASSING GENDERPOLICY. THIS POLICY IS
BASED ON TWO TRACKS.

THE FIRST TRACK WAS DIRECTED TOWARDS INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING.
AS SUCH WE HAVE SET UP A "NATIONAL MACHINERY" CALLED THE NATIONAL
GENDERBUREAU.

AMONG ITS RESPONSIBILITY IS THE COORDINATION OF PROJECTS, IN THE CONTEXT WHEREOF GENERAL CRITERIA HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO ASSES PROJECTS.

OTHER IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE RELATED TO THE:

1. COORDINATION AND MONITORING BROAD-BASED PLANNING OF NATIONAL ACTIONS; THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED WORKERS,
2. COLLECTING METHODOLOGICAL UNIFORM STATISTICAL DATA, RELEVANT FOR UNDERTAKING CONCENTRATED ACTIONS FOR THE FORMULATION OF AN INTEGRATED POPULATION POLICY;
3. SET UP A GOOD INFORMATION SYSTEM, AIMED AT THE DISCUSSION OF THE GENDER-ISSUE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

HOWEVER SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION IS CURRENTLY HAMPERED DUE TO A LACK OF NECESSARY FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

THE SECOND TRACK IS THE GUARANTEEING EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY FOR GIRLS AND FEMALE ADOLESCENTS, AS THERE IS PROOF OVER THE WORLD THAT THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF WOMEN HAS GREAT INFLUENCE ON THEIR APPROACH TO FAMILY PLANNING, ON THEIR SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, THEIR HEALTH CONDITION IN GENERAL AND THE HEALTH OF THEIR CHILDREN AND FAMILY, THEIR FIRST PREGNANCY, THE SPACING OF THEIR PREGNANCIES AN THE QUALITY OF THEIR PARENTHOOD.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME IS OF THE OPINION THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS ESPECIALLY THE POOREST STRATA, HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON AND ACCESS TO FAMILYPLANNING AND SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS RIGHT COULD BE BEST GUARANTEED BY A POLICY WHICH INCREASINGLY MAKES SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND AFFORDABLE METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION AVAILABLE WHICH PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD, INCLUDING THE PREVENTION OF UNWANTED PREGNANCIES.

IN SURINAME SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PLANNING. AND THERE IS A FRUITFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION, STICHTING "LOBI"

MR. PRESIDENT

WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT GOVERNMENTS DO NOT HAVE AN EASY TASK IN THEIR STRIVE TO BOOST OVERALL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STRATA IN THEIR SOCIETIES. FACED WITH THE POLITICAL WILL TO GUARANTEE A DECENT LEVEL OF NUTRITION, HOUSING, EDUCATION AND HEALTH FOR OUR POPULATION AND TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO A LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRIES, WE WILL OFTEN BE PLACED FOR DILEMMAS IN PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO SPECIAL GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETIES, TO WHICH OUR YOUTH BELONGS

IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE POLICIES DUE ACCOUNT HAS TO BE TAKEN OF THE DEVELOPMENTS TAKEN PLACE AT ALL LEVELS DUE TO THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION, WHICH HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF OUR COUNTRIES AND, PARTICULARLY ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES OF OUR YOUTH

TODAY, WE ARE ALSO CONFRONTED WITH TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS, WHICH NOT ONLY PROVIDE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES IN TERMS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE BUT SADLY ENOUGH ALSO AN INHERENT RISK ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR YOUTH.

THE UNCENSORED AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ON SEX AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR ON THE INTERNET, INCORPORATES A RISK FOR AN

IRRESPONSIBLE LIFESTYLE AS WELL AS FOR THE HEALTH SITUATION OF OUR PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY OF OUR YOUTH.

IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIFE-STYLE OF OUR CHILDREN, GOVERNMENTS SHOULD SEEK TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO PREVENT ANY FORM OF MISUSE OF THIS FORM OF TECHNOLOGY WITHOUT IN ANY RESPECT JEOPARDIZING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF FREE EXPRESSION.

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE UNFPA A MAJOR PROGRAM FOCUSED AT ADOLESCENTS, IS ABOUT TO START.

WE ARE HONORED THAT SURINAME HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR THIS MODEL-PILOT APPROACH TO REALLY REACHING THE ADOLESCENTS.

COGNIZANT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YOUTH FOR THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR OUR COUNTRY, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME HAS RECENTLY INSTALLED A HIGH LEVEL STEERING GROUP ON YOUTH POLICY. THE STEERING GROUP IS ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK TO FORMULATE AN INTEGRATED YOUTHPOLICY

MR. PRESIDENT,
THE BASIC HEALTH POLICY IN SURINAME IS IMPLEMENTED ON THE PREMISES THAT HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE, AFFORDABLE AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE POPULATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE. I AM PROUD TO STATE THAT 85% OF THE POPULATION HAS ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES THROUGH HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM.

MR. PRESIDENT,
ALTHOUGH POPULATION ISSUES IN SURINAME ARE NOT YET COMPLETELY
DEFINED IN TERMS OF AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK OF DIVERS
MULTISECTORAL ASPECTS OF DEMOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT, IT IS THE
INTENTION OF MY GOVERNMENT TO COME TO A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTI-
SECTORAL APPROACH OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND TO ENSURE
THAT POPULATION POLICIES ARE CLOSELY INCORPORATED IN ALL MULTI-
ANNUAL AND SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS, TAKING DUE
REGARD OF THE STRONG LINKAGES BETWEEN POPULATION, RESOURCES,
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO THE HUMAN
DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT, SINCE IT IS AWARE THAT BY PLACING THE
HUMAN BEING IN THE CENTER, A VITAL CONTRIBUTION CAN BE MADE
TOWARDS OUR COMMON GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MR. PRESIDENT,

WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMMENSE POTENTIAL THAT GOOD WILL AND
DETERMINATION CAN OFFER TO THE GENUINE UNIVERSALLY OF THE GOALS
OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE LACK OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT HAS TOO OFTEN IN HISTORY CREATED
SERIOUS HUMAN NEGLECT.

IN THIS LIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THIS CONFERENCE
REPRESENTS BOTH THE POLITICAL WILL OF THE COUNTRIES
AND THE CAPACITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO ENSURE THE
IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND COORDINATION OF A PROGRAM WHICH
AIMS AT BRINGING ABOUT REAL AND CREATIVE CHANGES IN THE CONCEPT
OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

THE CHALLENGE WITH WHICH OUR COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED IS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS: A CHALLENGE RESULTANT FROM THE FACT THAT MOST OF OUR COUNTRIES AT TIMES FACE UNCERTAINTY WITH REGARD TO THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR AN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED ACTIONS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE POLITICAL WILL TO EXECUTE THE RELEVANT COMMITMENTS HAS BEEN IN PLACE.

ANOTHER FACTOR THAT SERIOUSLY HAMPERS AN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION DERIVES FROM THE FACT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS OFTEN FAILED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY NEW AND ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL MEANS' FOR VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS OF OUR COUNTRIES. WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THIS CONFERENCE WILL FORM ANOTHER MILESTONE IN OUR COMMON PURSUIT TO BRING JOY AND HAPPINESS AND TO CREATE A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR OUR PEOPLES.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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