



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

350 EAST 35TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10016

PRESSRELEASE

Please Check Against Delivery

English Translation
(Original: Chinese)

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Zhongyu, State Councillor
And Secretary-General of the State Council of the
People's Republic of China**

**At the Special Session
Of the United Nations General Assembly
On the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the
Programme of Action of the International Conference
On Population and Development**

New York, 30 June 1999

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentleman,

First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation and in my own name, I wish to extend my congratulations to Your Excellency, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the current Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Chinese delegation will work together with Your Excellency and other delegations to make this Special Session a complete success.

Since the convocation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) five years ago, the international community and various governments have made sustained efforts for the implementation of the ICPD *Programme of Action*. We are pleased to see that the essentials and principles laid down at the ICPD are now embodied in the macro policies formulated by various governments, carried forward in various countries and universally accepted by various governments, non-governmental organisations and the general public. Through legislation, policy-readjustment, programme improvement, promotion of NGO roles as well as international co-operation and exchange, quite a number of countries have made encouraging progress in improving women's status, promoting gender equality, making education universal, improving reproductive health and family planning services, lowering the birth rate, maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. All these efforts have contributed to promoting the socio-economic development and improving people's health and welfare.

In the meantime, we have also noticed that we still have a long way to go before reaching the goals defined in the ICPD *Programme of Action*. Economic crisis and natural disasters in some countries have seriously

hindered the progress in implementing the *Programme of Action*. Regional wars and conflicts are posing grave challenges to world peace and development. Equity and social justice are overshadowed by the threat of power politics and hegemonism. Now, the basic reproductive health and family planning need of many couples and individuals worldwide is yet to be gratified. Environmental deterioration in some countries and areas is undermining people's health, especially the reproductive health of women. There exists a severe shortage of funds for implementing the *Programme of Action*. The commitment for international assistance is far from being fulfilled. It should be pointed out that official development assistance for **population-related** projects has been drastically cut back instead of increased at the juncture when Asian countries are in financial crises, Latin-American countries are burdened with external debts and African countries are increasingly marginalized in economic globalisation. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary and timely to hold the current Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Cairo Conference, and to reiterate the principles and spirit of the *Programme of Action*, summarise past experiences and lessons, look into the existing problems and seek possible solutions. There is no doubt that the current Special Session will exert a positive impact on boosting further implementation of the *Programme of Action*.

Mr. President,

In the past half-century, the Chinese Government and people have been concentrating their efforts to the modernisation drive. Over the past twenty years in particular, the policy of reform and opening-up has been carried out. The robust economic and social development has brought about marked improvement in people's livelihood. China's population programme has played a positive role in this process. China is the most populous developing country in the world. Having in mind the long-term interests of its people, the Chinese Government has made the population issue a strategic one, integrated it into the overall programme for its national socio-economic

development and started implementing the population and family planning programme since early 1970s. Since the Cairo Conference, the Chinese Government has given high priority to the implementation of the *Programme of Action*, formulated the National Family Planning Programme of China (1995-2000) and set long-term goals for its population and family planning work for the first half of the 21st century. The Government sees sustainable development as a major strategic principle, views the population issue in a broader perspective and addresses it in a holistic way. The population and family planning program of China stresses even more on improving the quality of the population (in terms of health and education) while keeping the quantity under control. While opposed to the use of coercive measures, it puts more emphasis on the integrated approach of carrying out publicity and education campaigns, providing quality services in reproductive health and family planning and bringing into play the role of the civil society and NGOs. Special attention has been given to combining the family planning program in the rural areas with economic development, poverty-alleviation, the universal education programmes, improvement of women's status, provision of social security and transformation of the old-fashioned family concepts. The Central Government and local governments have enacted laws to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of women, girls, the elderly, the minor and the disabled. Currently, China's total population is 1.248 billion with a natural growth rate of 9.53%. The total fertility rate has gone down to around 2.0. The mortality rate is 6.51‰, infant mortality rate 33.03‰ and maternal mortality rate 61.9 per one hundred thousand. The average life expectancy has gone up to 70.8 years old. China's population reproduction in urban and most rural areas has been basically transformed into a pattern characterised by low birth rate, low death rate and low growth rate. The success of China's population and family planning programme has not only stabilised China's population and promoted her socio-economic development, but also greatly contributed to the stabilisation of the world population.

—

At the same time, we are soberly aware that China is still faced with grave challenges in the field of population and development. The annual increase of about 12 million people to its population exerts a great pressure upon China's socio-economic development, resource utilisation, environmental protection and such undertakings as education, medical care, housing, communications and transportation, employment, social security etc. The lack of sufficient funds makes it difficult to fully meet the people's needs for quality service in the area of reproductive health and family planning. The greying of China's population at a time when the economy is still not quite developed will surely bring many new problems to the socio-economic development. We hope that the international co-operation in the field of population and development will be further strengthened so that we will find a faster and better solution to the problems confronting us.

Mr. President,

I wish to take this opportunity to elaborate briefly on the position and principles of the Chinese Government on the international co-operation in the field of population and development and further implementation of the *Programme of Action*.

First of all, the Chinese Government believes that the issue of population goes hand in hand with development. The population issue should be considered and addressed in the overall context of a country's national conditions as well as socio-economic development. Efforts should be exerted to develop a co-ordinated relationship between population growth and socio-economic development, resource utilisation and environmental protection so as to achieve sustainable development. The Chinese Government respects human rights in the field of population and development. We are of the view that when talking about protecting human rights, what come first are the right to subsistence and the right to development of all nations and peoples. Development is the basis for promoting and protecting human rights. Without this basis, human rights will be devoid of any real meaning.

Secondly, international co-operation in the field of population and development should be undertaken with full respect for sovereignty. While implementing the *Programme of Action*, the sovereignty and national conditions of each country should be respected. The differences in economic development levels, history and cultural traditions, religious beliefs and moral values of each country should be taken into full consideration. Overlooking such differences will make the goals defined in the *Programme of Action* unattainable.

Thirdly, a successful solution to the problem of funding is the key to the implementation of the *Programme of Action*. We appeal to the international community, especially the developed countries, to honour their commitment made at the Cairo Conference and provide financial assistance to developing countries and help them to overcome their difficulties in the field of population and development. China hopes that at this Special Session action-oriented proposals will be put forward to solve this problem.

Mr. President,

Despite the increasing number of unstable factors in the present international situation, we believe that the desire for peace and development is still the mainstream and it serves the fundamental interests of the people all over the world. We hope that the current Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly will provide a golden opportunity to push forward the full implementation of the *Programme of Action* and also a new starting point for international co-operation in population and development. In the population and other fields, the Chinese Government and people are always ready to join hands with the various governments and peoples around the world and contribute to world peace and human progress.

Thank you, Mr. President.