



MISION PERMANENTE
DE LA REPUBLICA DOMINICANA
ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

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STATEMENT

*BY H.E. DR. EDUARDO LATORRE,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC*

**IN THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE OVERALL REVIEW
AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF
ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION
AND DEVELOPMENT**

**July 1, 1999
New York**

Mr. Didier Operti
President of the 53rd Period of the
General Assembly of the United Nations

Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary General of the United Nations

Mr. President:

The Government of the Dominican Republic expresses its deep satisfaction to participate of this General Assembly of the United Nations, where the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference of Population and Development is being examined and evaluated.

The Dominican Government is convinced that as the expression of the entire society, the population constitutes the foundation on which all the economic, social and cultural phenomenon of our country take place in a dynamic way.

The Dominican population has experienced dramatic changes in the last three decades. We have moved from four millions to almost eight millions inhabitants since 1970 to the present, and the rate of quinquennial increase in population decreased from 2.4 to 1.7 in this same period.

The global rate of fecundity has decreased from 7 children per woman in the decade of the 60's to 3 children per woman at the present time. However, there are still differences in the number of children per woman according to where they live.

The life expectancy has increased in our country, going from 64 years in the 80's to 70.3, which means that the quality of life of the Dominicans has improved. We have a Human Development Index of 0.720, which places us in the fifth position in the group of 11 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with a Medium Human Development Index.

Since 1996, the Dominican Republic has experienced a sustainable development as a result of the economic policies implemented by the government of Dr. Leone1 Femandez. Such policies have guaranteed an increase in the Gross National Product (GNP) of 7.3%, recognized by the international organizations such as ECLAC as the highest in the world. Also, to be noted a sustainable increase in social expenditures of at least 30% annually in the areas of productive employment, education, health and housing.

In education, the increase in expenses has been of 44.2% in the past two years; in health of 30%, in social assistance of 60%, and in housing of 300%.

As a democratic government, our public policies are based in the recognition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, we assume the principles that

support the World Program of Action of Cairo, of September 1994, where the human being is placed at the center of all the development policies, the woman as the subject of human rights, and the actions of the population, including the reproductive health as indispensable components of sustainable development.

The Cairo Programme of Action has allowed the Dominican Republic to institutionalize new approach, language and concepts in terms of population and development. It has promoted programs of actions, has changed the governmental vision and decision, and at the end it has substantially modified the quality of life of the different population segments such as women, the youth and the children.

The Dominican Government has placed the reproductive health as an essential component within the population and development theme, under the understanding that in the demographic transition the world is experiencing, often the countries with greater deterioration in the reproductive health indicators, usually confront difficulties in their road to development.

Five years after Cairo, the Dominican Government has achieved the integration of the reproductive health and the attention to gender as a transversal component in these services. In addition, the initiatives to incorporate the man's responsibility in the reproductive health have been increased. Strategies have been designed and applied to meet the need of the reproductive health of adolescents and youths.

In terms of gender, the Dominican Republic can show progress such as enacting and applying the law 24-97 that modifies the Penal Code and the Criminal Code of Procedure. In this code the domestic violence and violence against women, rape, discrimination, the abandonment of girls, boys and adolescents and the abandonment of the family are penalized.

In 1997, the Electoral Law was modified to assign women a quota of 25% of the congressional and local elective positions, and each day more women are incorporated in relevant positions in the public administration.

Other legislations have included the Code for the Protection of Boys, Girls and Adolescents and the modifications of the Agrarian Law Reform, which contemplates women and the family unity as subjects of agrarian reform.

The new General Law of Education has been enacted and applied. The law includes the right to the education without discrimination, among other reasons by sex, equality of educational opportunities for all persons, the establishment of equality between men and women.

Mr. President:

On behalf of the President of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernandez, I reiterate to You the firm decision of our government to support the Programme of Action of the

International Conference of Population and Development approved in Cairo in 1994. We would also like to express support for the Report of the Hague International Forum that took place from the 8 to the 12 of February of this year, concerning the formulation and application of a National Policy of Population and Development, the reformulation of a General Immigration Law and the decentralization of the National Police of Population and the provincial and local levels.

The Dominican Republic commits itself to undertake the necessary efforts to strengthen its actions to comply with the Program of Action, of which we are signatories, putting special attention to:

- The creation of a favorable environment that guarantee the implementation of the population programs.
- The promotion of equality and equity between the sexes and the empowerment of women.
- The promotion of reproductive health.
- The strengthening of associations and the mobilization of resources.

On behalf of the government I represent I would like to appeal to all countries present here, in compliance with their commitments at Cairo, to increase their contributions to the programs for development through the United Nations Population Fund.

We will continue to develop strategic alliances between the government and the civil society to guarantee our commitments of Cairo +5. In this context, our government considers that the Non-Governmental Organizations must participate in the implementation of the population and development programs and to actively contribute to the national, regional and international debates.

We take this opportunity to express the gratitude of our government to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its important support to the population programs we implement, specially in the field of reproductive health, the gender perspective, the generation of data, the creation of public awareness and the design of public policies. This support has contributed to the decrease of infant and mother deaths in our country and to the development of local capacities for the compliance of the Cairo agenda.

Finally, we would like to ratify to You and the assembly that Cairo is a reality in the Dominican Republic. In fact, on behalf of the government I have the honor to represent I say that we will make of Cairo +5, a new opportunity to lead the destiny of our country with democratic and participative rules, based on humanism, the eradication of poverty, solidarity, equity and social justice, totally convinced that the population is the most important and valuable resources of the whole Nation.

Thank you Mr. President