



**STATEMENT  
BY**

**H.E. MR. CARL T.C. GUTIERREZ**

**GOVERNOR  
OF  
GUAM**

**TO THE  
21<sup>ST</sup> SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR THE  
REVIEW AND APPRAISAL  
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION  
OF THE ICPD**

*(check against delivery)*

Mr. President  
Distinguished Delegates

The Cairo Programme of Action is a real vision of the future; a future in which the people and the resources of our world exist with balance. The Programme is a vision of the world in which men and women are truly equal; a world that cares for its elderly, its poor and disadvantaged and gives them opportunity.

Mr. President

As a small island, Guam faces many challenges. Just 210 square miles in size, Guam is naturally more vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of disaster, regional economic and demographic pressures. We also remain one of 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories inscribed pursuant to the Charter. This unresolved question of our status is probably the single greatest threat to our ability to carry out our vision for social and economic progress.

Mr. President

In 1995, the leaders of our community, people from every walk of life, got together to put in writing our vision for the future. In that document -- which we called VISION 2001-- we identified the limitations of our resources. We created a blueprint that recognized a limit to the number of people that can be sustained by our fragile yet pristine environment. We also laid out measured goals that will help us achieve an improved quality of life for all our people.

Today, I am proud to say we have achieved over **70-percent** of the goals and we are in the midst of revising our plans and once again looking toward the future. One of the remaining impediments that hampers our progress is a situation that is regularly reviewed by Member States pursuant to the Charter -- that is Guam's status.

As we attempt to reduce the natural population growth -- even as we attempt to enhance education and provide a social safety net for the needy -- both legal and illegal immigration under the Administering power's regime threatens the balance needed to keep our fragile economy and environment from breaking under the strain. These matters must be addressed if our natural resources, **our** socio-economic development and our indigenous culture are to flourish

We are not, however, using our status as an excuse, as we take seriously responsible governance and our commitment to human rights.

On the issue of equality between men and women, we turn to our culture for guidance. The Chamorro people have always understood that women are the custodians of the future.

When 16<sup>th</sup> century colonists first came to our island, they thought the elimination of the males would end the Chamorro culture but they were wrong. The **vibrance** and renaissance of our culture today is a living testament to the strength and fortitude of the Chamorro women, the force of the matriarchs, the **Maga'Haga**.

Today, the role of women continues to be as it has always been, a powerful force in shaping the island's internal decision making and external relationships. Our laws and political process have followed our culture. My political partner, our Lieutenant Governor, is a woman. Our First Lady, Geri Gutierrez, a woman of great strength, is also a stellar example of the importance of women on our island, as she embraces her role to touch people's lives and has a direct hand in implementing programs in the community.

Over the years, however, the process of westernization has impacted on our customs and culture in many ways bringing both good and bad.

Along with rapid economic development -- a wage generated economy and world-class facilities that welcome visitors to our shores -- have come the urban social problems faced by so many of us.

I am proud to say, however, that in the spirit of the Cairo Programme, and in line with the Implementation Recommendations, we are using the tools of today to successfully combat these new problems. Over the past five years we have concentrated on family violence and social programs for the elderly and the poor.

Strict local laws including the mandatory arrest policy in cases of family violence have greatly reduced the threat of violence against women and children.

Stepped-up programs have doubled the amount of collections for child support and we have doubled our outreach programs for the elderly with many new public infrastructure assets.

We will soon be establishing the women's resource center where women can come to one location to find help for problems with health, parenting, or any other area of concern.

Our programs have resulted in a significant drop in teen pregnancy. Moreover there is a decline in our natural population growth rate as young families embrace an appreciation for the limitations of our **finite** resources.

One of my personal passions is the advancement of Early Childhood Development Programs, especially from age 0-3, helping men and women become better parents, from the moment a child is conceived. .

By promoting Early Childhood Development, I truly believe that we are helping to raise a new generation with brighter opportunities. A new generation that turns away from violence and that understands love and respect. A new generation that can live the vision laid out in the Cairo Consensus.

Guam is building this future on one of the most solid foundations. That is our deep and abiding respect for the concept of the “family”. We have a local word for it, “*inafa-maolek*”, it is the understanding of the interdependence of the extended family, as with First Lady Geri’s program “People Helping People.”

When a cousin or a brother is in need of help, there is always a safety net. Children are cared for by relatives at home and the elderly are kept close by and pass their wisdom to the younger generations.

In Guam, our elderly (our *mañaina*), hold a very special place in our society, one of great respect and attention.

And while there are many, many government programs that support these beliefs, no social program created by a government can take the place of “family.”

Mr. President

Family and culture are the foundation upon which any future progress of a community must be built. If we do not keep this foundation strong and deep then all we have achieved will slip away like a sandcastle on a beach.

We still have much to do. Our goals include strengthening the institution of marriage. We need to bring more out of poverty and reduce the number of families dependent upon programs of social security by creating more economic opportunity. We need to do more to address the problem of HIV/AIDS.

Building upon both our culture and our emerging ethnic diversity, we can do more to advance a more global view of our collective future. Improving our environment through better stewardship of the land and the sea is a never-ending struggle and balance in the face of development.

Mr. President

As we end this Special Session and look to the population and development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, please accept our assurances that our Government is committed to address these challenges in concert with the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action.