

AS WRITTEN



STATEMENT **BY**

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on behalf of
the Group of **77** and China

at the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly for
the Review and Appraisal **of** the Implementation
of the **Programme** of Action of the International
Conference **on** Population and Development

July 02, 1999

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Mr. President,

As I take the floor during this 21st Special Session of the General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, I do so on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and would wish, in these final stages of the Session, to commend you for your sterling leadership of our deliberations over the last three days. We have during this time, witnessed the reaffirmation of the political commitment made in Cairo to the Programme of Action, and have heard many testimonials to the efforts made over the last five years in pursuit of those commonly accepted goals and objectives. Yet, as we stand at the threshold of the new millennium, we can all recognize that there is much which remains to be done.

In 1994, at the historic International Conference on Population and Development—the largest intergovernmental conference on population and development ever held – we pledged our collective efforts to addressing the “critical challenges and interrelationships between population and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development” We set ourselves both quantitative and qualitative goals, and accepted that achievement of these would require not only the commitment and actions of individual nations, but would equally pivot on “a new global partnership among all the world’s countries and peoples, based on a sense of shared but differentiated responsibility for each other and for our planetary home” .

Our review and appraisal of actions since Cairo have shown that much progress has been made in the last five years. Governments have realistically tackled population issues, and people the world over have benefited from the positive results of the many policy changes which have been instituted in order to achieve the targets we set ourselves in the Programme of Action. Where due attention has been given to education, in particular to the goal of universal access to primary education and to the value of education of children, particularly of girls, benefits have accrued to the wider society, as women have moved closer to contributing to the development process through realization of their full potential.

The targeting of improved basic health services for all, in particular women, whose basic but special health needs are often neglected, has borne fruit in many instances. It is no secret that healthy populations are more cost effective and can participate constructively in the development of their nations. Yet, Cairo’s goals for strengthening basic health systems and programmes, including reproductive and sexual health programmes, are being pursued with varying degrees of success. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to ravage populations, even as mortality and morbidity from infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, such as tuberculosis and

malaria to name but two, take their own toll. Maternal mortality and morbidity, our review shows, remain high, and adolescents continue to face special health risks.

Though Cairo and other international Conferences have highlighted the importance of the empowerment of women, and the promotion **and** protection of their basic human rights, **much** remains to be done if the **productive** contribution of this important sector of the population is to be effectively harnessed, **Advocacy** for gender **equality** and equity, and for the **inclusion** of **gender** perspectives in policy formation and programme implementation, are key elements for Cairo implementation, **and** though some progress has been made, there is obviously a long way to go.

Based on our assessment of **progress** since **1994**, we believe that the holistic approach which Cairo advocated to population and development needs to be clearly **reaffirmed**. Our review seems to indicate that though efforts have been made to incorporate population concerns into development strategies, the need **for** action necessary for achieving sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is being subsumed in many **instances** by the **exclusive** targeting of population issues, I submit to you that it is unrealistic to anticipate that the **Programme** of Action can be ultimately successful, if the important framework **of** development is not supported.

The **programme** in its principles reaffirms the **right** to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental **human** rights, and **places** the human person at the centre **of** development. **It** moreover **affirms** that in the pursuit of sustained economic growth in the context of **sustainable economic** development, "**all** countries should recognize their common but **differentiated responsibilities**. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development, and should continue to improve their efforts to promote sustained **economic growth** and to narrow **imbalances** in a manner that can benefit countries, particularly the developing countries."

As developing countries, we **continue** to put our efforts and resources towards achieving an improved quality of life for **our** people through development. **Our** problems, and their solutions, **are all** interrelated, **Efforts** of developed countries to assist are on record. Yet, even as we acknowledge recent developments like the Cologne initiative, we recognize that resources to support the development efforts of developing countries need to be made more manifest. Addressing such issues as the **alleviation** of the debt burden and the eradication **of poverty, will in** itself promote the **achievement** of the **goals** of the **Programme of Action**.

In effect, financial resources are an important part of the equation crafted in Cairo. Our current review and appraisal of the Last five years establishes clearly that realization of the commitment to the cost estimates of the Programme of Action has been uneven. While developing countries as a whole are well on their way to meeting their projected share of the package, our developed partners fall alarmingly short of the finish line. I take this opportunity therefore, in the true spirit of Cairo, to urge our developed partners to pursue this aspect of the Programme of Action with the same vigor as all others. Financial resources are paramount to implementation and both this review and ultimately the Programme of Action, would be exercises in futility if financial resources are not forthcoming in a timely manner. Our assessment in this Special Session of how we are progressing with implementation, should prompt steady remedial action and concerted efforts to work within the specified framework.

It can escape none of us that the interrelationships among the goals and objectives of Cairo, and among those involved in implementing the Programme of Action, determine the very nature of the partnership which must be established and sustained at all levels for success in our efforts. This review process has been instructive in confirming our awareness of this need to work in concert, and has shown clearly what is possible when we do. We have worked many long hours in the Preparatory Committee for this Special Session in order to realistically review our efforts over the last five years and, based on those results, to determine the way forward. Though we are but five years into what is a twenty-year long global process, the paths we choose now will ultimately influence the point at which we finally arrive. If nothing, we are acutely aware of the symbiotic nature of our existence, and conscious that success for Cairo's goals will only be achieved when we work together.

The hopes of the new millennium are shared by all people, in developing and developed countries alike. Successful implementation of the goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action will make many of those expectations a reality. This review process, I believe, has reinvigorated us. We look back to Cairo now, as we will soon at this millennium, and anticipate that the immediate future will see a translation of the political will expressed in this Special Session into a more efficient and effective realization of our commonly accepted goals and responsibilities.

I thank you Mr. President.