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Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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Press Release

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Statement by

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to the United Nations

At the Twenty-First Special Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations
for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action
of the International Conference on Population and Development

New York, July 1, 1999(Juche 88)

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Overall Review of the implementation of the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

We are of the view that the issue of population and development is an important agenda that should be given priority in preparing the 21st Century to be oriented for peace and prosperity of humankind and further believe that this Session would provide a momentum for facilitating more intensive implementation of the Plan of Action with active participation of all countries.

Mr. President,

The process of the implementation of the Plan of Action vindicates that the international community has taken the right way of comprehensive approach to the population issue on a wide and long-term perspective with main emphasis on welfare and development of people.

All this has been proved by the increased public awareness and understanding of the population issue and tangible successes and progresses achieved in such areas as improvement of reproductive health, protection and promotion of women's rights and reduction of mortality rates through the implementation of Plan of Action for the past 5 years.

However, such success is only a good start compared with long-term goals of the International Conference on Population and Development and even that successes were not equally made in many parts of the world.

Therefore, international community still has an important task to overcome **difficulties** and challenges and further implement the Plan of Action by consolidating already made successes and drawing from the experiences and lessons, with a view to successful achievement of the long-term goals of population and development.

Mr. President,

The negative impact of the globalization **and** consecutive natural disasters in recent years have deteriorated the economic marginalization and poverty of many developing countries, causing serious retrocession of the already made successes in the field of population and development.

The population issue is not a simple issue that is limited only to growth, structure and distribution of population but rather a comprehensive issue directly related to sustainable development for guaranteeing present and future life of human being and the improvement of their livelihood. In each country, therefore, without success in such development areas as poverty eradication and sustained economic growth, a satisfactory and far-reaching solution of population issue cannot be ensured.

It shows that the issue of population and development is presenting itself as one of the pressing issues faced by the developing countries.

Mr. President,

It is true that primary responsibility for the successful solution of the issue of population and development is in each country. Therefore, governments should demonstrate their firm political will and leadership for consistent implementation of the Plan of Action and fully mobilize and effectively use human and material resources for population and development.

However, serious economic stagnation and unfavorable international economic environment currently confronted by many developing countries make it difficult for them to resolve the problem of absolute lack of funds and resources and technical capabilities badly needed in achieving the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Since the developing countries constitute the majority of the world population, without overcoming these serious economic and financial difficulties and rectifying international environment that prevails **unfavourably** for the developing countries, successful implementation of the international Plan of Action is inconceivable.

From this point of view, we believe it is imperative for the international community to facilitate the promotion of a supportive economic environment, particularly for developing countries in their effort to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development as agreed in the International Conference on Population and Development.

To this end, Official Development Aid should be increased and active assistance provided for technology transfer and national capability building as committed by the developed countries in the Cairo Conference.

At the same time, genuine relationship of cooperation should be established between countries on the principle of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs, taking into **full** account the differences in cultural traditions, socioeconomic environments and level of development and, by far, strictly observe the principles as provided for in the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and **Development**, with a view to smooth conduct of international cooperation in the field of population and development.

Mr. President,

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea considers the constant promotion of people's welfare as a matter of highest priority and has, since long, taken the resolution of the population issue as an important task directly related to the improvement of people's livelihood and future development of the country, paying deep attention to the population and

development.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, thanks to the popular policy of the Government and the well-established socialist system of our style centered on popular masses, significant successes have been achieved. Social policy and measures have been implemented at a high level such as free medical care, 11 -year free compulsory education, equality between men and women and 150-day paid maternity leave.

The Government of our Republic has attached further importance to the implementation of the Plan of Action following the Cairo Conference in 1994 and taken a series of measures to actively carry on the work of population and development in keeping with the situation of the country.

The Government began by constantly increasing public awareness of the issue of population and development through translation, publication and dissemination of the Plan of Action of the Cairo Conference on a nation wide scale. It also established a population policy suitable to the country's situation and is providing guidance to Government bodies such as State Commission of Planning, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Academy of Social Sciences and Population Center in their works to execute and supervise the policy implementation through their subordinated institutions.

At the same time, relevant social organizations like the Korean Democratic Women's Union and Korean Family Planning & Maternal and Child Health Association are encouraged to take their active parts in family planning and other reproductive health services.

In spite of temporary difficulties from severe destruction of health and education facilities and industrial and agricultural infrastructures as a result of natural disasters in recent consecutive years, our people are full of courage and firmly convinced that under the Great Leader and the social system they can rehabilitate the damage in the shortest possible time and build a rich and strong country.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to affirm that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to adhere to its lofty mission of pursuing the promotion of our people's welfare and sustainable development, faithfully implement the Plan of Action of the Cairo Conference and actively cooperate with international community.

Thank you.