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STATEMENT

BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AMBASSADOR NASTE CALOVSKI

at the SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NEW YORK, 30 JUNE -2 JULY 1999

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Republic of Macedonia is pleased to see you presiding with the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly. I am sure that the Session under your leadership will end up its work successfully.

The views of the Republic of Macedonia coincide with those expressed by the Representative of Germany speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Macedonia has actively participated in the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. It held one of the Vice President's Posts. The Cairo Action Program of the International Conference on Population and Development was an important event and a successful undertaking of the United Nations with long term effects on the population and development policies and measures, both at the international and national level, of the Governments and of the civil societies. It represented a new look and important advancement of the understanding of the current demographic developments and trends, of the sustainable development, of the role and the situation of all parts of the population, grown-ups, elderly, youths, children, women and men.

The most important result of the Cairo Conference was the adoption of the Program by consensus which made it implementable and a serious commitment. The implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Cairo Program would immensely help and enable all of us to pursue the development, democracy, justice, human rights, non-discrimination, gender equality, and to pursue the observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter of our Organization.

We fully share the Secretary-General's view expressed at this Forum the other day that "Cairo was not just a Population Conference", that "all states now understand that if they are to provide adequately for the future health and education of their citizens, they need to incorporate population policies into their development strategies" and with his negative answer on the question whether we have done all that the Cairo Conference has recommended. It is correct to state that there is no need to rewrite the Cairo Action Program.

The adoption of the Final Document by the present 21st Special Session of the GA on the implementation of the Cairo Program should enhance the resolve of the International Community, as well as of all countries and civil societies to do more in the future. Of course, the implementation of the commitments and of the actions will vary from region to region, **from** country to country, depending on the actual political, economic and social situation of the particular region or country. The thing in common of all is the wish and the request of the peoples to have a better standard of living than what they had in the past, to have real sustainable development and sustained growth of their country, that their human rights and **freedoms** are fully protected and observed.

At this point I would like to express our high appreciation for the inspiring dedication, excellent, untiring and fruitful work of Dr. Sadik and Ambassador Chowdhury for the preparation of this Special Session and its result.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Macedonia at present is preoccupied not only with the issues such as gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, reproductive rights and reproductive health, but with topical issues such as the return of the Kosovo refugees to their homes, the negative consequences of the Kosovo conflict on our country and on our region and with the reconstruction of our region after the Kosovo war. The result of this preoccupation and these efforts will directly effect the livelihood of our population in the immediate present and in the future. It is estimated that due to the Kosovo conflict the losses of Republic of Macedonia amount to several billions of US dollars. After 1991 this was the third time that due to actions not of our making the Republic- of Macedonia incurred such huge loses. Regretfully, we have received no compensation or serious foreign aid so far. However, we expect that as a result of the present international activities, in the first place on the basis of the recently adopted Pact on Stability for South-Eastern Europe, the response of the international community will be forthcoming.

The priority of the Republic of Macedonia is to 'see that the Kosovo war is the last one in the Balkans. In the 20th century, in our region we have had eight wars, of which four took place during the last decade of this

century. We are optimistic for the future because the idea of creating greater states has been finally defeated and the goal to make our region a region of democracy, stability, development of good-neighborly relations and sustainable development has prevailed. In order to make this a reality the process of integration of the Balkan States into the European Union should be accelerated, by taking bold actions by the EU and by each Balkan State individually. There should be no more hesitation in the effort to quickly Europeanize the Balkans, which were once the center of the European civilization.

The Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked country situated in the very central part of the Balkan Peninsula covering an area of over 25 thousand square kilometers. According to the 1994 census, it has about two million inhabitants out, of which 66, 7 % are Macedonians and the rest are minorities with the largest percentage of ethnic Albanians, 22, 9%, followed by the ethnic Turks 4%, the Roma 2, 3%, the Serbs 2%, the Vlachs 0,4%, undecided 0,1 % and others 1,8 %, of which 0, 8%are Muslims, 0,4% Bosnians, 0, 2% Egyptians, 0, 1% Montenegrins, and 0,1% are Croats. The average age of our population is 32, 7 years for men and 33,9 for women. The average age men reach is 70,1 and women 74, 4 years. Infant mortality is 4,8. The urban population is about 58%, while the rural is 42%. The natality rate of the Macedonians is 3,8, of the ethnic Albanians 19,9, of the Turks 14,3, of the Roma 19. It is estimated that in the next 25 years the total population will increase for 14,5%. The elderly population will increase from the present 8, 5% to 13, 1%, the young population, those less than 14 years, will decrease from the present 24, 8% to 19, 5%.

The demographic policy of my Government pays particular attention to the call for reduction of maternal mortality, strengthening the family planning process, strengthening the health and sex education, stronger actions in the field of HIV/AIDS, addressing the problems of adolescents, the aging population, the migration problems and so on. We hope we could have better results in future. The education of girls in this respect is of immense importance.

The highest priority of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia is the employment of its population. About 40% of the working population is not employed. Another priority is the education of our youth, good health of our people and healthy environment. Although faced with so many difficulties most of them due to external factors, as I indicated earlier, the

results of our endeavors are encouraging. It is widely known -that the Macedonian population is a hardworking, healthy and an educated one.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to note the Secretary General's **finding** that the implementation of the Cairo Program is "off to a good start". However, we are concerned with his conclusion that all ODA-Official Development Assistance is declining, that the international population assistance is "leveling off" and that, in particular, for achieving better results in the implementation of the Cairo Program " a number of financial, institutional and human resource constrains must be overcome". We agree that in order to have a better implementation of the Cairo Program and of the Final Document of this Special Session a high political will and commitment are required. We would like to hope that it will not be lacking.

This century, Mr. President was a century of wars and destruction, but at the same time one of advancement of the science and technology, as well as advancement in many other parts of the human activities. The population all over the world has been faced with all kinds of difficulties and unfortunate situations, but it did not loose its humanness and its will to build a better future. The world will enter the 21st century with over 6 billion people. A large number of them are living in poverty, in conflict situations, and are unemployed, without basic living standards, many are faced with poor health facilities, with poor education and so on. To change that situation and make it a better one, national and international policies and measures are required. In that, the work of the United Nations is essential. The 21st Special Session of the GA is an appropriate means to direct national and international efforts towards that desired goal, that the population all over the world should really have a better life in the 21st century and that human solidarity should prevail.

Thank you.