

# NICARAGUA



Address of  
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During the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly  
for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the  
Programme of Action of the  
International Conference on Population  
and Development

(Check against delivery)

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STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF THE NICARAGUAN FAMILY MINISTRY.

In attending this very important event that unites us in our common hope for the good of all our nations, I wish to start my address to you with a warm fraternal greeting from the Nicaraguan people and its government.

In accordance with our laws and in recognition of the inherent right of every human being consigned in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the American Declaration of the Rights of Mankind, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in the United Nation's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in the Organization of American States' Convention on Human Rights, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on other binding commitments, the Government of Nicaragua has the will to continue the implementation of the Program of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Nicaragua's priority in which it is intensely involved is the improvement of the Nicaraguan people's living conditions by social and economic development. We understand that our task is difficult. Our problems are great and their solutions are complex. We will not enumerate all our problems, none the less it is important to remember the aftermath of a revolution, a decade of civil war and recently the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Mitch, misfortune which we share with other countries of the Central American region. All of these events make it difficult for us to fulfill our present and future commitments in education, health, nutrition and production.

Most of our population is living in poverty, even so, we agree with the ICPD Program of Action that wants to put people first. Nicaragua recognizes that its most valuable resource for development is the human person: every woman, man, girl, boy, elderly woman and man. We know that each one of them with his or her dignity and potential, given the proper access to education, health, and other social services can become agents of more development and common good.

It is for this reason that our Delegation applauds all the goals set forth in this new stage of the ICPD Program of Action in the fields of education, basic health and other social services.

Conscious of the fact that for Nicaragua globalization presents great challenges in the social and economic spheres, we acknowledge population issues as one of the important variables in development. After ICPD Nicaragua put forth a National Population Policy as part of the government's strategy to reach social and economic development. This policy is being adopted in a responsible manner not only by the official sector, but also by civil society.

Our population policy is contained within the government's overall plan to reduce poverty through policies that make services such as education and basic health more available to the poorest sectors.

Within our population policy is contained all the components of demographic dynamic such as mortality, fertility, internal and external migration, human settlements, urbanization and population space distribution in its relation to economic and social development, natural resources and environment.

Likewise, our National Population Policy through its general guidelines promotes actions to put the family at the center of promotion of programs directed to specific population groups taking into account age, condition, ethnic, vulnerable situations as well as value education and formation from infancy. Participation is promoted for the population in general and for fathers and mothers of adolescents and young people in holistic sex education activities and for education in family life, in respect of their rights to intervene in the contents of this education. This should be done in a way that promotes a climate of mutual respect and tolerance for the norms and values upheld by our society.

Our holistic sex education programs are geared towards preparing young people so that when the time comes they will know how to live as responsible mothers and fathers. It also seeks to educate for life within the family.

Our Population Policy promotes a holistic sex education within the framework of our culture, our moral values and the exercise of self-control, self-care, self-esteem, fidelity and responsibility.

It also considers that young people and adults must be informed completely and truthfully in order to make free decisions about existing methods in order to avoid unplanned pregnancies and reduce risks of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and **HIV/AIDS**.

Abortion is considered a criminal act in Nicaragua and law prohibits it.

Regarding empowerment of women, our Constitution acknowledges the equal dignity of men and women and their equal rights. It also includes the mandate of equal salary for equal work under the same conditions. Greater conscience about women's right to equal opportunity in all spheres of society without sexual discrimination is being promoted by the government as well as by civil society.

In summary, our Population Policy defines itself as a group of measures directed to influence reproductive behavior, these being: education, formation, sexual and reproductive health of our population, promotion of Nicaraguan society's values, the right to **life** from the moment of conception, access to education and basic health, the irreplaceable role of the family and the social and cultural survival of ethnic groups.

It is evident that the family is an important part of our National Population Policy. That is why we try to support it and do our utmost to promote intergenerational dialogue. To us the family is still the "the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled

to protection by society and the State” as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 16, No. 3) and in our Constitution.

Proof of our concern to preserve the value that the family is for society, our President, **Arnoldo Alemán**, last year took the initiative to create the Ministry of the Family which seeks means of working with civil society to strengthen this institution in all that is weakening it.

It is our belief that every child has a right to a father and a mother that will love, care for and provide a stable surrounding. The Preamble of the Convention of the Rights of the Child although not legally binding was stated in the Convention. Therein we read: “the child by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as **after** birth’. It is a fact that a great number of countries have a majority of its population 15 years old or under. We are included in such a group. And we ask ourselves, “who should take care of the needs of children? Nicaragua has chosen to support the family. We consider that family is an issue that can not be separated from population issues.

For these reasons, the Nicaraguan Delegation is sorry that a more relevant place was not given to this subject in the revision and evaluation of the Program of Action we have been working on since last March.

Nicaragua recognizes what a delicate task it is to shape a common and effective path out of the **afflictions** shared by developing societies. Once more, Nicaragua undertakes the challenge involved in the task of holistic human development, taking into account the values that in the past have given our people the strength to overcome times of crisis and other difficult circumstances. The integrity of the family, the right of new human life to reach its potential, personal moral formation, the potential of woman and the girl child and the responsibility of men are some elements that will continue to guide Nicaragua en the implementation of this new phase of the ICPD Program of Action.

Thank you very much.