



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

TWENTY-FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FOR THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
30 JUNE - 02 JULY 1999

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02 JULY 1999

Mr. President,
Excellencies and
Distinguished Delegates,

1. Five years ago, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) adopted a historic Program of Action to shift the emphasis of population programs away from population numbers. The ICPD brought a paradigm shift in population policies and program in terms of their focus and scope. The Program of Action also promoted an integrated approach in addressing the issues of population and development, and the deeply interlinked issues of literacy and education, health, environment, economic growth, and women's empowerment, equity and equality.
2. We agreed that these recommendations will be implemented by each country, consistent with its national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural background.
3. Pakistan, which is the seventh most populous country in the world, also embarked upon a process that sought to re-align gradually its approach towards population issues. We needed this paradigm shift as Pakistan's population program since the mid-1960s could achieve only modest success.
4. Following the ICPD, we have launched several new initiatives both for improving the availability and accessibility as well as quality of services. These initiatives primarily include, gradual integration of family planning with reproductive health services, target-free and voluntary approach for family planning services and advocacy through Parliamentarians and religious scholars. We are encouraging **NGOs** and the private sector to play an active role in all areas of social development in Pakistan.
5. The role of woman in promoting population welfare cannot be overemphasized. Pakistan is, therefore,* taking major steps for the empowerment of women. We have acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**) in 1996. A National Plan of Action for Women was launched by the Prime Minister on the Pakistan Day in March 1998.
6. We have so far made substantial progress in improving the reproductive health indicators. The total fertility rate has fallen, contraceptive prevalence rate has risen, infant and maternal mortality rates have registered appreciable decline.
7. Despite the gains made through these new initiatives, Pakistan's current demographic profile with a total population of over 134 million poses numerous challenges to the Government as well as to the civil society. Pakistan's current Population Growth Rate (PGR) is approximately 2.4 per cent per annum. The Total

Fertility Rate (FTR) is about 4.8 per cent per annum. At the current growth rate, **Pakistan's** population would double in the next 29 years. This would be a colossal challenge to us.

8. Many developing countries are also confronted with similar challenges. The five year review clearly indicates that there are serious constraints in the implementation of the Program of Action of ICPD. While the concepts of the Program of Action are being embraced at a reasonably fast pace, the necessary resources required to operationalize these concepts have not been made available to the developing countries. In fact, international assistance in the post ICPD period has considerably declined.

9. Consequently, the progress in controlling the burgeoning population has not been very satisfactory. It is estimated that the world population will total somewhere between 7 to 7.5 billion in 2015. Eighty per cent of this increase will be in developing countries. This would result in greater pressure on the environment and further slowing down of the already slow process of development. In certain cases, it would aggravate the already deteriorating situation.

10. In fact, in certain areas the situation has worsened. Since 1994, the number of people living in poverty has increased. Per capita income has dropped in more than 100 countries. Nearly one-third of the 4.4 billion people living in developing countries, particularly those living in the poorest countries, can expect to die by age 40.

11. The issues of population cannot be addressed in isolation. Overall development and sustained economic growth are crucial for promoting population welfare.

12. Cairo consensus integrated population and development on a clear understanding that the latter has a direct bearing on the health, reproductive health and other social sectors. Review of the last half a decade, however, shows that our main focus remained on health and reproductive health issues only. We, therefore, urge that the balanced focus on population and development mapped in Cairo should form an integral part of key actions for the future.

13. This Special Session has also brought to fore the issue of reproductive health needs of refugees all over the world. Developing countries are host to large refugee populations which have their peculiar problems. Pakistan hosts one of the largest refugee population in the world. Due to declining resources, these refugees have either limited or no access to some of the basic services. This august Assembly has issued a call for the provision of full range of social, health and reproductive health services for refugees.

14. We fully support this call. It should, however, be recognized that for a country like Pakistan, which is unable to satisfactorily service its own population, an

adequate level of services to the refugees will require massive financial and human resource investment. We remain confident that the international donor community will provide sufficient resources to carry forward the mandate entrusted by the Special Session of the General Assembly. Same will hold true for other areas of follow-up on ICPD Program of Action.

Mr. President,

15. The ever growing population of the world in developing countries will have global impact. It is our common future and we should work jointly to address the threats being posed by such global problems. Developing countries cannot sustain their sincere efforts to realize the goals of ICPD without the support of the international community. It would be unfortunate if the breakthroughs in the recent reproductive health changes are allowed to fall back mainly due to lack of resources.

16. At this Special Session, we should renew our commitment to the **implementation** of the recommendations of the ICPD Program of Action by the target date of **2015**. The renewal should be followed by commensurate action to provide **necessary resources** to realize not only the goals of ICPD but the **larger goals of economic and social** development.

I thank you, Mr. President.