



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**  
**PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
201 EAST 42ND STREET, SUITE 405 . NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017  
TEL: (212) 557-5001 . FAX: (212) 557-5009

AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT BY

MR. JOSEPH DEMAS  
ACTING DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PLANNING

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT (ICPD + 5)

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[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

I am pleased to inform you, Mr. President, that relevant policy guidelines, institutional capacity building initiatives and collation and analysis of appropriate data are in their progressive stages.

The constitution of Papua New Guinea, Mr. President, recognizes gender equality and equity empowering women to be actively involved in all forms of political, social and economic activity for better quality of life.

The Government has established a Women's Division with the mandate of formulating policies and programs to address gender equality, equity, and empowerment of women.

Mr. President, in 1994, the Government endorsed the National Women's Policy which is aimed at improving and increasing the position and participation of women in our society, both as agents and beneficiaries in the development process. Other efforts have been made to promote women's participation in national development and decision-making vis-a-vis, membership in the Provincial and Local Level Government.

Mr. President, the National Department of Health in collaboration with other Government Agencies, private sector and civil society as well as donors has prepared our current Fourth National Health Plan 1996-2000 which encourages fundamental shift in the way health services are delivered to Papua New Guineans living in urban and rural areas in the country.

In implementing this plan and consistent with the ICPD Program of Action, a number of initiatives have been initiated which among others, including the promotion of training and awareness on reproductive health, family planning, sexual health, safe motherhood and the establishment of a National HIV/AIDS Council aimed at initiating and implementing policy and programs to combat this dreadful disease which unfortunately has no boundaries and respect for anyone.

Mr. President, Papua New Guinea has made concerted efforts in fostering and strengthening the partnership between Government, donors and civil society.

In recognizing this very important partnership between the Churches and NGO's, the Government in 1995 endorsed the NGO Policy that gave legitimacy and recognition to the positive role of churches in the delivery of health, educational and other social services. The Government stands ready to support and encourage this important on-going commitment.

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

**On** behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I join other Ministers and those who have spoken before me, in congratulating you in your election as President of the **21<sup>st</sup>** Special Session on ICPD.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Chowdhury and the members of the Bureau for the able leadership and direction in steering the Preparatory Commission in reviewing the ICPD-POA and preparing the **ICPD + 5** report for deliberation by Governments at this United Nations General Assembly Special Session.

May I also through you, Mr President, extend our gratitude and felicitation to the United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency, Mr Kofi **Annan** for his keen interest on the International Conference on Population and Development (**ICPD + 5**).

Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik deserves to be commended by the international community for her foresight and outstanding leadership of UNFPA. We equally recognize the untiring positive contribution and partnership of other development agencies of the United Nations system.

Mr. President, before I outline efforts undertaken and problems encountered by Papua New Guinea in implementing the **ICPD** Program of Action, may I take this opportunity to convey the sincere apologies of my Minister for Treasury and Planning, the Honorable Mr. Iairo Lasaro, CMG, MP, **who was to have** lead the Papua New Guinea Delegation but could not avail himself due to other pressing commitments **at home**. He **has, however, expressed his wish for a successful outcome of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session and pledges his Government's support and commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of the ICPD + 5.**

**Mr. President, I am happy to announce that Papua New Guinea has made some progress in the implementation of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action (ICPD-POA) but much is yet to be done.**

**The Government in collaboration with respective stakeholders is currently reviewing our National Population Policy which envisages to reflect changing local and global trends and conditions. The revised policy is expected to be multi-sectoral in nature and scope and will be operational by October 1999.**

The NGO Policy encourages the NGO community to work together and to share ideas and efforts that would promote sustainable development aimed at improving the living standards of our people.

Mr. President, although progress has **been made** in some areas, there continues to exist issues and problems which hinders and impedes our intentions and efforts in the effective implementation of the ICPD Program of Action:

- a) The need to improve the capacity and effectiveness of formal institutional mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the national population program in the country. These institutions lack human, financial and technical resources.
- b) Gaps remain in terms of statistics and research required for integrated population and development planning. Data collected from censuses and surveys are not fully analyzed and disseminated to acceptable standards.
- c) Despite notable progress to date, gender inequality in the country continues to remain widespread. The National Gender Related Development Index show that in every province, achievements of female in terms of life expectancy, income opportunities and education remain low.
- d) There still exist widespread inequality between males and females in terms of economic and political participation; and decision-making.
- e) The National Women's Policy and NGO policy lack full publicity and implementation.
- f) The existing high maternal, infant and child mortality rates need to be reduced to acceptable levels.
- g) There is a need to address the reproductive health **needs** of men, young people and adolescents that were previously overlooked under Maternal Child Health Programs.
- h) The high prevalence of STD and HIV/AIDS related complications need to be seriously addressed, bearing in mind the quality aspects of care needed.

- i) There is need to provide technical and financial support to NGO's churches and the civil society to encourage their participation in population and development.
- j) There is a need to encourage the private sector to be **more involved** in implementing the Program of Action on reproductive health, family planning and sexual health.

Mr. President, some of the progress that we have made would not have been possible without external support and assistance. It is therefore fitting that I take this opportunity on behalf of the Government to express our appreciation and gratitude to the United Nations system, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Australian Government and others who have been partners in this process.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Papua New Guinea wishes to reiterate that in order to effectively and successfully implement the good intentions of Cairo and the outcome of this Special Session on ICPD+ 5, Governments and International support and cooperation is a must. This we believe is an affirmative commitment that should generate coherent political will and leadership if the dreams and aspirations under the ICPD + 5 are to be realized.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I am pleased to announce the commitment by the Papua New Guinea Government to continue with the implementation of the ICPD+ 5 within the limits of our resources and support from the international community.

Thank you, Mr. President.