

As WRITTEN

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Mr Chairman,  
Esteemed Delegates.

Development, to address The Special Session of the UN General Assembly, convened on the occasion of the five-year anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.

When Partners in Population and Development was conceived five years ago, 10 developing countries committed themselves to I am honoured, on behalf of the Partners in Population and the philosophy of Partners and enhanced south-south collaboration. Today, Partners has grown to 14 member countries. Since the original 10 came together in Cairo five years ago, (Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand, Tunisia, Zimbabwe), four more countries have since joined: China, ~~Pakistan~~, India, and most recently Uganda. We are in discussions with other countries, and we hope to announce new additions to the Partners roster soon.

Partners' aim, as set out in Cairo, was to gain a broader view of one another's programs by sharing and adapting successful initiatives and strategies resulting in a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses from both sides. Such candid sharing of experience is possible in a South-South setting of mutual trust, respect, and openness.

Over the past three years, Partners has conducted roundtables, consultations, and seminars throughout the world aimed at helping governments and their NGO partners formulate project ideas and turn them into proposals. I am pleased to inform you that the Partners has sought and already obtained funding for some 20 south to south projects.

Implicit in all Partners-sponsored projects and proposals is the essential NGO component. Our member countries have long **recognised** that policies can only be implemented with the help of civil society, and our Governments have been grateful for the unfailing assistance of national, regional, and international **NGOs** serving their communities for many, many years. Partners welcome a formal NGO involvement in both our policies and programmes, and we are hard at work developing a full-fledged agenda of NGO collaboration.

The transfer of south to south technology, the technology of programmes and policy, is underway but it cannot be achieved without the unflinching support of our sisters and brothers in countries far wealthier than ours. There is a community of donors who have **recognised** the long-term value of investing in Partners. We are grateful to them.

As you are all too well aware, the financial targets for the year 2000 to implement the Programme of Action are unlikely to be met. Although we got off to a good start in 1994 and 1995 with a global total of \$9.5 billion earmarked for population programmes and projects, of which \$7.5 million came from developing countries, developed country governments have lost their momentum. If current rates of funding continue through 2000, the implementation of ICPD will be impeded by a \$2.1 billion funding shortfall. Reasons for these **un-kept** promises vary, and they are almost all the result of the whims of politics. Although developing countries have met and in some cases exceeded their financial commitments to the implementation of ICPD, they cannot continue to carry the burden; especially in the debilitating climates created from the still unresolved south east Asian economic crisis, and ongoing political upheavals and civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa.

The message that policy makers should take away from this five-year review of Cairo is this: developing countries are doing their share to implement the Cairo agenda. But they cannot do it alone. They need much greater support from the international community than they have received so far, and the mechanisms exist. Partners, for example, is an effective, and efficient instrument for further implementation of the Programme of Action. Donor country investments in collaboration with Partners can be maximised fully through our ability to adapt and rapidly apply proven and **well-tested** approaches to improving and expanding reproductive health and family **planning** services.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Consider these statistics:

30 Years ago in the developing world:

- The average woman had 6 children.
- In 8 children died in their first year.
- Nearly 12 million infants died every year.
- Life expectancy was just over 50 years.
- **Annual** per capita income was about \$700.
- More than half of the people lived on less than a dollar a day.

Today in the developing world:

- The average woman now has 3 children.
- Infant mortality has been cut in half.
- 5 million fewer children die every year.
- Life expectancy has risen by more than a decade.
- Per capita income has risen by 60 percent
- The percentage of those in absolute poverty has been cut almost in half.

We should be proud. Progress has been made. When commitments are fulfilled, development can be achieved. Of course our task is by no means over. The current HIV/AIDS epidemic in the developing world is a diabolical obstacle placed in our continuing uphill struggle. But we will address this disaster just as we have faced other unbearable odds. And we will succeed, but only if we embrace and enhance partnerships among all the actors in development: governments, NGOs, funding agencies, and most importantly, the people whom we serve.

With your continued confidence and support, we will gather again in five years at the next 10-year UN conference on population and development, to see even more partnerships established, underway, and changing the face of the developing world. Thank you.