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*Permanent Mission of Suriname  
to the United Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza  
Suite 320  
New York, N.Y. 10017*

ADDRESS

BY

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
H.E. MR. SUBHAS C. MUNGRA

TO THE  
TWENTY-FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
DEVOTED TO THE OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NEW YORK, 1 JULY 1999

Mr. President,

Five years ago in 1994 the international community has adopted, after very lengthy and difficult negotiations in Cairo the Programme of Action on Population and Development, which can be considered as a landmark in international cooperation and a turning point in the way we think about population as it relates to development. A new vision on population policies and programmes, that is no longer solely based on demographic numbers but is rooted in fundamental human rights (including the Right to Development and the Rights of Women and Children, in particular the girl child). It also rightly calls for the empowerment of women as a matter of justice and agreed that reproductive health is a human right, bringing a new gender dimension into population policies and programmes. Based on the Cairo agreement population is now recognized as a integral part of the development programme of most nations in the world.

Mr. President,

It is commendable that this review process on the implementation of the Programme of Action has been successful in resisting attempts to reopen the discussion on what was already agreed upon in Cairo in 1994 and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/128 on 19 December 1994, thus enabling us to focus our attention on furthering the goals of ICPD, rather than distracting us from doing what is right for our respective peoples.

Mr. President,

During the five years since the Adoption, we have witnessed the resolve of Governments, the UN system, spearheaded by UNFPA, National and International NGO's to implement their respective commitments, with different level of success.

The Secretary General has indicated in his report on Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, the major achievements reached and the constraints encountered in our efforts to reach the goals of ICPD. In particular we would like to emphasize his observation that excellent work has been done by countries in the field of integrating population and development concerns and that these gains have come under tremendous pressure as a consequence of economic difficulties caused inter alia by the negative impact of globalization, in particular for the developing countries.

Mr. President,

Suriname, with the **diversed** composition of its population has in the past received a satisfactory level of dealing with population issues in all its aspects.

Notwithstanding the economic difficulties caused by lack of financial resources as a consequence of fallen ODA and reduced export earnings, the country has continued to strive for providing the needed services in the framework of the principles and goals of ICPD and the Cairo Programme of Action.

We would not be successful without the support of UNFPA, IPPF and our partnership with National NGO's, in particular the Foundation "Lobi", which has stood in the **forefront** of providing information and services regarding family planning and sexual and reproductive health.

Mr. President,

We still, have a long way to go and the pressure resulting from our economic misfortunes, has indeed hampered our efforts to gain a greater success in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Within the framework of the overall implementation of the Programme of Action we are pleased to inform that we have made progress in the following fields:

The establishment of a national Office on Gender policy and the advocacy of ICPD principles and awareness raising.

Strengthening and expanding of the NGO-network involved with the implementation Cairo, ICPD Programme of Action.

Implementation of a national programme on free cervix screening for **five** years.

Establishment of a Women Parliament Forum and efforts to set up a Youth Parliament.

Priority areas of the Government of Suriname's population programmes are inter alia: the promotion of gender equality, reproductive health, family planning, and the protection of the human rights and dignity of migrants

The second track is the guaranteeing of (basic) education, especially for girls and female adolescents, as there is proof over the world that the educational level of women has great influence on their approach to family planning, on their sexual behavior, their health condition in general and the health of their children and family, their first pregnancy, the spacing of their pregnancies and the quality of their parenthood.

Mr. President,

The Government of Suriname is of the opinion that all individuals especially the poorest strata, have the right to information on and access to family planning and social and medical services. The enjoyment of this right could be best guaranteed by a policy which increasingly make safe, effective and affordable methods of contraception available which promotes responsible parenthood, including the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

With support from the UNFPA a major pilot program focused at adolescents, SRHC will become operational in the near future.

Recognizing the importance of the youth for the future development of our country, the Government has recently installed a high level steering group on youth policy.

The steering group is entrusted with the task to formulate an integrated youth policy.

Mr. President,

The basic health policy in Suriname is implemented on the premises that health services should **be** available, affordable and accessible to all segment of the population, with emphasis on the development of primary health care. Currently some 85% of the population has access to health care and services through a health insurances system.

Mr. President,

The Government of Suriname is determined to continue to honour our commitment to the Cairo Programme of Action, however we are being confronted with serious resource constraints, as is the case for many other small developing countries due to economic shortfalls and diminishing earning capacity. This calls for new and additional resources from Donor countries and International Financial Institutions to complement national resources for the further implementation of the noble principles and the ICPD Programme of Action and to reverse the current decline in overall official development assistance.

Mr. President,

In closing my Government is convinced that the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, to be adopted by this twenty-first special session of the United Nations General Assembly, will give further impetus to the successful implementation, in a renewed spirit of strong partnership with the civil society (NGO's), the private sector and the international donor community in the fulfillment of the noble principles as agreed in the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994 for a substantial improvement of the well-being and the fundamental rights of the majority of the world population (especially women, children and adolescents) as we enter a new millennium and a new century.

I thank you Mr. President