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**STATEMENT BY**

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**AT THE TWENTY-FIRST SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
FOR 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. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

**I would like to join the speakers before me in congratulating you on your election to preside over this assembly on population and development. Presiding over this conference may be an easy task for you, but it assures us a safe landing after an exciting voyage.**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**As we approach October 12, 1999, the day when the population of Earth will reach six billion, we recognize the national achievements in the demographic profiles of nations. Not only advancements in fertility but also improvements in mortality make this a milestone. Both the babies to be born and the lives to be saved will make our population reach six billion on that day.**

**Improvements of such magnitude have been possible only as a result of global concerns and contributions. Intergovernmental conferences reflecting global concerns have made it easier for individual nations to achieve their goals. In my country, the Infant Mortality Rate has been reduced to less than one third during the 25 years after Bucharest. Demographic developments that benefited from intergovernmental conferences are not limited to developments in mortality but extend to all facets of social life in Turkey. For instance, fertility norms and practice have changed considerably and the difference with our European neighbors is not as big as it used to be. All of the reproductive rights cited in ICPD are fully enjoyed. The quality of reproductive health and safe motherhood services are improving. With respect to migration, please note that “life time migration” is becoming “job time migration”.**

**Preparatory committee meetings were serene, but not easy and our experts have been through many colorful debates. We respect them all, for we believe that, the common denominator was the concern of delegates over their people. We take this as a sign of concern rather than ambivalence. Population issues are too serious to be left to ambivalence.**

Mr. Chairman,

My Government considers this document, together with other documents of intergovernmental consent, as important tools for realizing the ICPD Program of Action. In realization of the basic principles of ICPD, these tools function effectively in improving quality of life, expanding participatory democracy, prospering human rights, and mutual respect of individuals and communities among themselves.

For this reason, distinguished delegates, in accordance with the philosophy of the ICPD Program of Action, we have to put more emphasis on the rights of individuals, their needs and enjoyment of free and informed choice. Only then will it be possible for individuals to reach their expectations.

As we have reiterated at every opportunity, the reciprocal cause and effect relationships between development and population are duly appreciated in the Turkish development plans. Consequently, one can see strong parallelism between our development plans and the statements of the international community. Turkey has benefited from the ICPD and succeeding documents, and has developed or revised national action plans such as the National Action Plan for Women's Health and Family Planning, National Action Program for Children, and National Environmental Action Plans. My Government has also shown its commitment to the goals and implementation of the ICPD Program of Action by creating new institutional mechanisms. Just to name a few, I would like to mention the Multi-disciplinary National AIDS Commission, Family Planning Advisory Board and ICPD Follow-up Committee. There are more.

Turkey, as in the past, is ready to share her experiences with the international community, especially with her geographic and cultural neighbors. We are developing institutional arrangements to facilitate visits by members of the international community. My Ministry's "center of excellence on population" is one example. Under these arrangements, members of the international community will have an opportunity to come together, discuss population matters and learn from each other.

Global trends unfortunately do not favor strong and stable families. Defined within each national heritage, policies for strong and stable families should be supported. In doing so, recognition of the linkage between population, development and human rights is an essential issue. The rights of every member of the family, that is, adolescents, parents, children and elderly should be protected, respecting the proper balance among them. We believe that the family is the basic constituent of a society and every effort should be undertaken to protect its integrity.

Turkey, as one of the countries that realized rapid organization process has permanently joined the studies of UN about settlements. Habitat II assembled in Istanbul is the last link of attempts of international community to determine the agenda of the 21st century and the conscious claiming of the ownership of world problems starting from settlements.

More than ever, we are observing a broader room for the contributions of civil societies into population issues. Implementing population policies sometimes requires innovative and flexible approaches where the civil societies, especially NGOs, have a comparative advantage over governmental bureaucracy. They should be equipped with necessary mechanisms to improve grass roots participation and let the voices of the people be heard.

Mr. Chairman,

Seventy-two years have passed since the realization of the World Population Conference in Vienna in 1927. During the following years, through days of rain or shine, the issues of population have surfaced onto the agenda of the global community with ever increasing strength. Maybe not all the populations themselves are stable, but the population issues seem to be quite stable on the agenda with due emphasis on current concerns. We happily observed the emphasis on economics in Bucharest, policy and sociology in Mexico, and human rights in Cairo. What is next? Maybe furthering of reproductive rights, promotion of good governance, or globalization of democratic rights. Whatever the emphasis may be, certainly it will have to be encircled by our common topics such as development issues, empowerment of women, partnership with the non-governmental sector, mobilizing resources, the issues on which we had been ironing out the differences at the three global intergovernmental conferences organized by the United Nations, not to mention Belgrade and Rome. At this point allow me to register our acknowledgments of the late Rafael Salas and UNFPA's able director Dr. Naliz Sadik.

Mr. Chairman,

We have been through the most turbulent century in the history of mankind. Now it is reaching its end. The autumn of the twentieth century will soon be replaced by the spring of the twenty-first century. Let the roads diverged in the fall be converged in the spring.

Thank you.