



TURKMENISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by
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Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations**

**at the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Program of Action
adopted at the International Conference on Population & Development**

New York, 2 July 1999

Distinguished Mr. Chairperson,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Cairo Conference was held at the time of great changes in the world, when newly independent states had begun their socio-economical reforms. The decisions elaborated at the Conference has formed the foundation of the National Program of Turkmenistan which envisages multi-faceted problems of population development, conditions of various branches and of the economy as a whole. The Program is based on the achievement of sustainable growth of the economic potential of the country and was aimed at strengthening of national healthcare system, elevation of peoples' material, educational and cultural standards, and at environmental protection.

Since the conference, the statistical bureau of Turkmenistan have carried out monitoring and evaluation of the main indicators of reproduction of the population, and have improved their statistical reporting formats by using the indicators which are in accordance with international practice and by taking into account national characteristics. The results of 1995 Census of the population of Turkmenistan provided demographic, economic, educational, geographic and migrational characteristics of the population of the whole country and of its

regions. Registration of the unemployed population was carried out simultaneously by an examination of the labor availability. Based on these findings, a medium-period Employment Program population was elaborated for the years 1998 - 2002.

The Government of Turkmenistan pays great attention to the issue of gender equality. Women comprise 50.4% of the country's population, and its level remains stable since 1995. In accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan women enjoy equal rights in the areas of education, professional training, career rewards and advancement, and social, political and cultural activities. Transition to the market economy has had a favorable influence on the population's activity, including women's activity in private business and in joint ventures. In 1995 in Turkmenistan small enterprises involved 27.6% women, and in 1997 this percentage had already risen to 32.6%. In medium-sized enterprises women were involved at - 18.3% and 21.6%, respectively. In order to strengthen women's roles at every level of public life, the Government, with the support of the UNDP, opened the Women's Bureau of Turkmenistan. This organization serves to advance the coordination and distribution of gender related information among state agencies, international organizations, donors, non-governmental and public organizations. It also supports women's participation in the developmental activities of the country.

The law of Turkmenistan "On Education" guarantees education to all citizens without prejudice to ethnicity, social origin economic status or gender. This education is free of charge at all levels within the state standard. The level of literacy among women almost equals men's.

The strengthening of healthcare is one of the high priorities of the State Program of Socio-Economic Development of independent Turkmenistan. According to the act of the President of Turkmenistan, State Program "Health" was adopted in 1995. The program aims at the reconstruction of the health administration in all aspects: financing, preliminary medical service, hospital services, pharmaceutical services, human resources, and medical research, including reproductive health care, as well as at family planning, food consumption hygiene, sanitary education, etc. The total fertility rate reduced from 4.3 to 3.4 children per women. The indicators of infant mortality rate have been constantly declining for the last 10 years, and there is tendency for declining rate of maternal mortality. The typical problem for Turkmenistan is a short child spacing interval (an average of 1.4 years between pregnancies) and many births. In order to solve the problems of reproductive health in the country there was established the

Reproductive Health Protection Service. It aims at reducing maternal morbidity rate and the maternal and child mortality rates. Further, this organization provides services to families to prevent unwanted pregnancies, advises about birth intervals and about optimal timing for childbirth based upon the age of the parents.

With support of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) 12 centers of reproductive health were opened in different regions of the country and 49 units of reproductive health were opened in various districts. Significant work has been done in Turkmenistan with UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on child immunization, elimination of iron deficiency, prevention of infectious diseases, oral rehydration therapy, as well as in the return to exclusive breast feeding as a major instrument in the reduction of prenatal and infant morbidity and mortality. The World Health Organization (WHO/EURO) and the UN Development Program (UNDP) have assisted Turkmenistan in carrying out an analysis of its health sector. Turkmenistan greatly appreciates the help of these organizations.

The Government of Turkmenistan has been purposefully implementing its population development policy in accordance with the decisions of the Cairo Conference of 1995. At the same time it faces some difficulties. There is the need for establishment of a coordinating body for population issues; the country needs to improve its demographic statistics; Turkmenistan needs adequate computer software and human resources training.

The Government of Turkmenistan is very confident of the work of the United Nations and it expresses its readiness to continue and strengthen its close cooperation with the world community in pursuing the final goals of the International Conference on Population and Development for peaceful, healthy and full value life of present and coming generations.

Thank you for your attention.