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STATEMENT

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The Twenty-first Special Session of General Assembly for the Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (30 June - 2 July 1999)

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New York, 1 July, 1999

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly Special Session on Population and Development. I believe that under your Presidency, the Session will be successful. I would also like to express our appreciation for the excellent preparations made by the Preparatory Committee and the Secretariat including the comprehensive documentation and reports to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Being fully aware that the development of human resources constitutes a decisive factor for the development and prosperity of our nation, since the 1960s, Vietnam has begun to implement a Population and Family Planning Programme and considered it as an important and integral component of the overall national socio-economic development programme. In its policies, the Government of Vietnam views human beings as both the target and subject and a driving force for development. The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Law on Health Protection and the Law on Marriage and Family recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in practicing family planning on a voluntary basis while harmonizing interests of individuals with those of the community and the entire society.

The ICPD Programme of Action adopted in Cairo in 1994 is of significant importance in setting the national and global goals of population and development for all countries to strive for. Based on the ICPD recommendations, Vietnam has reviewed and adjusted her policies and strategies with a view to achieving sustained economic growth and population stability.

In recent years, Vietnam has recorded important socio-economic achievements, particularly in the health and population sectors. The fertility rate has declined considerably. So have the infant and maternal mortality rates while maternal and child health care and family planning services have considerably been improved. Compared with other countries at the same income level, Vietnam's achievements are noteworthy. The present population growth rate of 1.8% per year (as compared with 3.2% at the beginning of 1990's) and its trend of further decline give a realistic hope that the replacement level fertility will be reached by 2005. This will be a low scenario of population growth projection envisaged for Vietnam by the United Nations. The economic and financial crisis in Asia has adversely affected Vietnam. Yet, the Government of Vietnam has been

determined to continue its investment with a view to meeting the basic social needs including those for reproductive health and family planning.

Mr. President,

Although a number of significant achievements have been recorded in the field of population and family planning, difficulties and challenges still remain on the way to achieve the goals on population stabilization with high population quality and sustainable development. In the years to come, while maintaining our effort to reduce the fertility rate, our national population programme will focus more on population structure, population distribution and quality of population. The key orientations will include:

- Developing a comprehensive strategy on population and development; integrating the population and reproductive/ family planning programme into other socio-economic development programmes;
- Promoting population education among young people to equip them with basic knowledge about population and development, reproductive health and sexual health;
- Improving the quality of reproductive health/family planning services and clients' accessibility to them;
- Improving the status and empowerment of women in the family and society;
- In the immediate future, the population programme will concentrate its efforts and resources on those remote, isolated and poor areas where the fertility rate is still high so as to reduce the population growth rate, on the one hand, and to create favourable conditions for socio-economic development and improvement of living conditions of the population in those areas, on the other hand.

Mr. President,

The Government of Vietnam considers the relations between population and development an important part of the overall national development strategy and a springboard to improve the quality of life of each individual, each family and the entire society. We realize that greater efforts must be made in order to achieve those goals on population and development as set forth in the Cairo ICPD Programme of Action. Bearing this in mind, we hope that the proposals for key actions for the further implementation, of the Programme of Action of the

International Conference on Population and Development will be adopted for submission to the General Assembly.

On 1 April 1999, the United Nations Award Committee announced the 1999 United Nations Population Award. **One** of its winners was the Vietnam National Committee for Population Family Planning. **On** this occasion, allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of Vietnam, to express our sincere thanks to the United Nations Agencies, the Governments of UN Member States, international organizations and especially to UNFPA, who have provided Vietnam with valuable assistance over the past two decades. We would also like to thank international friends for their encouragement towards Vietnam on this special event. We wish to share our experiences in population and family planning work with other countries, to strive for the overall goals set forth by the ICPD Programme of Action.

Let us strive harder to implement the programmes on population and development for the benefits of the present and future generations, of each individual, each family and each nation and for harmonious and sustainable development of mankind.

Thank you for your attention.