



**Troisième session du Comité préparatoire
pour la Conférence internationale
sur la population et le développement**

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro
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Monsieur le Président, mesdames, messieurs,



C'est pour moi un grand honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui à l'ouverture de la Troisième Session du Comité Préparatoire de la Conférence Internationale sur la Population et le Développement dont la tâche principale est de poser les derniers jalons concernant les décisions qui seront prises à la Conférence même. En effet, vous avez la lourde responsabilité de débattre, dans les jours à venir, des projets de recommandations qui constitueront les éléments de base du Programme d'action soumis à l'approbation de la Conférence. Ce Programme d'action qui prend comme point de départ le Plan d'action mondial pour la population ainsi que les recommandations visant à assurer sa mise en oeuvre, a comme thème principal, le lien entre les questions de population et le processus de développement. Comme vous le savez, le développement à long terme l'amélioration de qualité de vie des hommes, des femmes et des enfants peuplant la planète a été l'ambition de la plupart des activités des Nations Unies dans le domaine économique et social.

Depuis son adoption en 1974, le Plan d'action mondial a guidé les activités des gouvernements et de la communauté internationale dans le domaine de la population.



La consécration du droit fondamental de tous les individus et des couples de décider librement et de façon responsable du nombre d'enfants et de l'espacement des naissances et du droit de disposer de l'information et des moyens nécessaires pour le faire, constitue le principe essentiel de tous les programmes sur la population dans le monde. Aujourd'hui, en partie grâce à l'expansion des programmes de planning familial, cinquante-neuf pour cent des couples en âge de reproduction ont recours à des moyens contraceptifs et la population mondiale s'accroît moins rapidement qu'il y a quarante ans. Cependant, la population de la planète augmente chaque année de 93 millions, et ce chiffre sans précédent ne diminuera pas de façon significative d'ici les vingt prochaines années. Ainsi approchons nous du vingt et unième siècle avec la lourde responsabilité de résoudre un double défi : maintenir, voire renforcer, les efforts visant à réduire le taux de croissance de la population et assurer une qualité de vie meilleure pour cette population de façon à ne pas compromettre les perspectives de croissance économique soutenue et de développement durable.

Un pas de géant a été franchi au cours des vingt dernières années avec la prise de conscience que les questions de population sont étroitement liées aux problèmes de développement. Répondant aux recommandations du Plan d'action mondial, de nombreux pays ont établi des mécanismes visant à intégrer leurs politiques de population

dans leurs politiques de développement. Toutefois, le concept même du développement et les moyens de le promouvoir ayant évolué, le besoin s'est fait sentir de réviser notre approche du rôle que la population joue dans le processus de développement.

Mr. Chairman,



Viewed as a whole, the Programme of Action reflects the recognition that development implies more than sustained economic growth. True development cannot be achieved when large parts of the population are living in poverty, suffering from malnutrition and disease, and lacking access to education and employment opportunities. Correcting these shortcomings by investing in human beings makes sense, not only because of moral or humanitarian considerations, but mostly because of hard-headed economic necessity. As the world economy moves to the post-industrial era, having a skilled work force becomes essential if countries are to compete effectively in the global market.

In this respect, investing in women is particularly relevant. One of the lessons to be learned from successful development models is that educating women, providing them with employment opportunities and empowering them by assuring that they have legal equality with men are

measures that have immediate positive effects on the well-being of families and children. Demographically, reductions in maternal and child mortality, and a closer match between desired and actual fertility all result from providing women with education and the means of controlling their own lives. The draft Programme of Action rightly stresses the importance of such measures and others directed to improve the status of women worldwide.



Just as the continued inequality of men and women in an ever more interconnected world is untenable in the long run, so are other types of regional and social inequities. The draft Programme of Action provides important guidelines for the reduction of inequalities at the national, regional and international level. A whole range of actors, from Governments to grass-roots organizations, are urged to cooperate in ensuring that the world we bequeath to future generations is no longer a world divided. May I, at this stage emphasize the pioneering work done in the past and present by the NGOs; we all expect it will continue into the future. In this time of uncertainty, change and opportunity, it is such an important task to lead the way by showing that consensus in the field of population can be reached and maintained.

While the world's population continued to increase, in other ways the world is growing smaller. In this era of instant communication,

when the number of economic, social and cultural factors linking nation states is growing dramatically, no one can afford the luxury of isolationism. In the world of the information super-highway and an ever more open trading system, where the choices open to individuals and families are multiplied, cooperation is mandatory if solutions are to be found to the problems still facing the world's people. I very much hope, therefore, that the spirit of cooperation may reign as you engage in a forthright debate of the issues during the coming weeks.

I should like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by pointing out that it has been the task of the Population Division in my Department to provide substantive support to the preparatory activities for the International Conference on Population and Development. Our partnership with the United Nations Population Fund in that endeavour has been most rewarding, particularly because of the dedicated leadership of Dr. Sadik. We are, as always, ready to assist this Preparatory Committee on any substantive questions that may arise, assuring you that they will be treated with objectivity and independence.

As an economist, I am interested in the results of your deliberations and their implications for the formulation of a realistic and effective agenda for development. As the head of DESIPA, I am also interested in the implications that they will have for the future work of



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the Department. As a result of the restructuring of the economic and social sector of the United Nations Secretariat, DESIPA today is in a better position than ever to respond to the intellectual challenges posed in the field of population. We believe that our role as analysts of trends and policy issues will be crucial in contributing to monitoring the implementation of the Conference's outcome, just as it has been with respect to the previous two World Conferences.



It only remains for me to wish you all every success in completing the preparatory work for the Conference. I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that under your leadership, this Preparatory Committee will accomplish its tasks most expeditiously.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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1 - Ind. Commission

2 - Paraguay

3 - Canada

4 - E.U.A

5 - Nicaragua

6 - Pilipinas

7 - Surinam

8 - Inão

9 - Ecuador

10 - Malawi

11 - Senegal

12 - Angola

13 - Cuba

14 - Zero Population Growth

15 - Youth delegates for population, ind. and

Inter-Action

16 - Family Org

17 - Brazil

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