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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by Ambassador Warren Zimmermann, United States Alternate Representative to the Second Preparatory Committee for International Conference on Population and Development, on Item 5, Proposed Conceptual Framework of the Draft Recommendations of the Conference, May 17, 1993

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the views of the United States concerning the document which will be adopted at the Cairo Conference.

In preparing our comments, the U.S. delegation benefitted greatly from the interventions and statements prepared by the other delegations, as well as the excellent speech given by the Secretary General on Friday.

The U.S. delegation fully agrees that the decisions of the Cairo Conference should be reflected in a new consensus document. This new document should build on the Bucharest World Population Plan of Action and the Mexico City Declaration and Recommendations, not attempt to revise them. The new plan of action should respond to the dramatic changes which have taken place in the past two decades, as well as anticipate the needs of the next century. We believe the new plan should be as concise and action-oriented as possible, given the scope and pressing importance of its subject matter.

We also support the suggestion of the Secretary General that the present framework should include separate and prominent attention to specific goals we in the international community share. These goals will provide a standard for evaluating our efforts and holding us accountable in the future. A 20-year time-frame seems quite appropriate.

In addition to deciding the type of document to come out of Cairo, the Secretary General also called on us to agree on the specific issues to be addressed by the document and the interrelationships among them. We are



impressed by the considerable convergence of views emerging, as exemplified in the statements by the representative of the EC, the representative of the Group of 77, the delegation of India and the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) community.

I would like to reiterate a few of the common themes at this PrepCom which the U.S. delegation hopes to see as part of the new plan of action:

- o the centrality of the individual and human rights in all matters of population policy. As the Secretary General stated in her speech, "coercion, whether physical or moral, has no place" in population policies and policies;
- o the empowerment of women and gender equality, as well as the obligations of men;
- o the reaffirmation of a full range of reproductive rights as human rights;
- o the strengthening of family planning programs in the context of a more comprehensive approach to women's reproductive health;
- o the reduction of disparities among peoples in quality of life;
- o the assurance of a healthy and sustainable environment for current and future generations; and
- o a commitment to a comprehensive approach to population issues that integrates population, consumption, environment and development.

We and other delegations have already circulated suggestions about the organization of the conceptual framework and the major headings and subheadings. Further discussion on these questions will be taking place in informal sessions. However, generally speaking, we reaffirm the importance of considering all the major themes of this conference: interrelationships among population, environment, consumption and development; fertility, reproductive rights and health; general health and mortality; aging and family formation; and international and internal migration.

With regard to essential principles, the European Community has advanced our thinking significantly by proposing a clustering of principles, which we endorse, that will clarify and consolidate our work. We would like emphasize that women's concerns and gender considerations be recognized as integral to each of these principles. Further, special attention should be given to indigenous people, refugees, marginalized peoples, people with disabilities and the underserved.

We would retitle Chapter 1 "Interrelationships among Population, Consumption, Environment, and Development," to emphasize the cumulative effects of these combined factors on individuals, communities and the globe. The Secretary General requested guidance on the relative emphasis to place on the consequences and specific causes of environmental degradation. We urge that the document identify the root causes and



focus on solutions through a fully integrated set of population, consumption, environment, and development policies. Economic growth is of importance to people in all nations. The challenge is to achieve that growth within the context of environmental sustainability, addressing both population growth and resource consumption. Our recommendations must reflect the global community's determination to develop environmentally sensitive technologies, fair trade arrangements, and sustainable development strategies that will help ensure a healthy community for all.

We believe Chapter II should be retitled to incorporate the concepts of gender equality and equity along with women's empowerment. We support the focus on women's empowerment, not simply roles and status, which has emerged during this PrepCom. We suggest special attention be paid to the fact that opportunities for women are shaped from the moment of birth by adding a subchapter B on The Girl Child. The serious neglect and, in many cases, outright abuse and violence directed at girl children can no longer be ignored or tolerated. Finally, we also suggest adding a subchapter C on men's responsibilities to support gender equality throughout society and to ensure the well-being of their partners and their children -- responsibilities which depend importantly on men's sexual behavior and use of appropriate male methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies and STDs.

Chapter III on population growth and structure, including attention to family formation, children and youth, and ageing, addresses universal, demographic and social concerns for both developed and developing countries. In particular, the goals, policies and programs that we develop need to recognize the variety of family forms that exist in the world today and the fact that the needs of the elderly are posing increasing challenges for all societies as life expectancy increases and family structures change.

Chapter IV, recognizes the importance of the interrelationships among reproductive rights, reproductive health, and family planning, and the need to develop policies and programs that enhance these interrelationships. First, a subchapter on reproductive health and reproductive rights would incorporate safe abortion as well as maternal health care and STD/AIDS prevention (areas that the Secretariat had proposed for Chapter V on overall health and mortality). Second, family planning as a separate subchapter would reaffirm the importance we all accord to access to good quality services. We would add a third subchapter on adolescent sexuality and fertility. These issues have been addressed in our previous statement. The recommendations of the Bangalore and Botswana expert meetings provide excellent guidance on these themes. There should also be a subtitle in this chapter concerned with human sexuality and gender relations. While many may see human sexuality as a private realm beyond the proper scope of attention of intergovernmental resolutions, we consider it essential for governments to legitimize serious public discussion and promote knowledge and education in these areas.

In addition to the specific chapter addressing reproductive health, a chapter on overall health and mortality would be appropriate. Among other things, this chapter would draw attention to two critical health



concerns closely related to fertility and reproductive health objectives: the need to continue efforts aimed at reducing infant and child mortality and the need to invest more in the infrastructure to meet basic socioeconomic needs and to provide both preventive and curative health programs. We note the special challenges posed by the needs of those who are homeless and hungry.

With regard to the chapters on international and internal migration, we believe our deliberations should reinforce emerging international norms concerning the rights of individual migrants and refugees, with particular attention to the special vulnerabilities of women and children. In addition, we must underscore the need for further examination by governments of the longer-term economic and political causes and consequences of migration, including the roles of population pressures, poverty and environmental degradation.

A series of chapters remain which address critical matters of implementation: information, education, and communication; capacity-building; technology and research; national and international action; and partnerships with non-governmental groups. From our perspective, the arrangement and grouping of these sections could be modified in the final set of recommendations, and we will provide additional comments on these to the Secretariat. However, I would like to highlight here a few key points:

First, the commitment we have stated to the centrality of women in population, environment and development concerns must be reflected in all aspects of implementation of the conference recommendations and goals. Gender considerations and women's direct participation must figure prominently in education, training, research agendas, and resource allocation.

Second, legal and regulatory barriers, which often impede progress toward population and sustainable development objectives, should be specifically addressed. In particular, laws and policies which discriminate against women and constrain the roles of the private, voluntary and commercial sectors must be reexamined.

Third, capacity-building should give high priority to investments in the knowledge base that supports our endeavors, including basic data collection and analysis, biomedical research, social and behavioral research, and policy and program research and evaluation. Those who are affected by policies and programs, especially women, must be involved in decision-making in all stages of research. Further, they must have access to data and research findings which are the basis for informed decisions by individuals and for monitoring program performance.

Fourth, the ability of individuals to exercise their individual human rights and act responsibly requires awareness, knowledge and information. Therefore, we underscore our belief in the need for a renewed emphasis on information, education and communication in virtually every area of activity addressed by the Cairo conference. We would also emphasize the urgent need to reduce sex role stereotypes in public information as a major means to enhance gender equality.



Lastly, we need to focus on estimating the resources required to meet the population and reproductive health goals we set for the year 2015. We urge the Secretariat to prepare estimates to be considered at PrepCom 3, along with a proposed sharing of responsibility among donors, national governments and the private sector.

Before I close my remarks, I want to suggest that we agree during this PrepCom on procedures for information exchange and feedback between now and the third PrepCom scheduled for next April. We suggest the Secretariat circulate, well in advance of PrepCom 3, a set of draft documents including recommendations to ensure that comments from government and non-governmental organizations can be incorporated in a revised draft to be considered at the PrepCom. These comments by governments and NGOs could be communicated both directly and through informal intersessional consultations conducted by the Secretary-General. NGOs should have the opportunity to participate fully in all intersessional activities. A revised draft should then be made available to governments in all official languages well ahead of PrepCom 3.

Mr. Chairman, we very much look forward to working with you and the Conference Secretariat through the remainder of this PrepCom and the preparations for Cairo. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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