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Statement by The Honorable **Timothy E. Wirth** United States Representative
to the Second Session Preparatory Committee for the International
Conference on Population and Development, Closing Statement, May 21, 1993

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to make a few concluding remarks. On behalf of my delegation, I must start by saying how privileged we feel to have been able to participate in this preparatory meeting. We would like to express our particular thanks to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for providing such a welcoming framework for the conference. We must also express our appreciation to you, Dr. Sai, to Secretary-General Nafis Sadik, to the chairman of the working groups, Mr. Biegman and Mr. Kaaria, and to all who have worked to make this a successful PrepCom.

I want to congratulate the Chairman on the excellent draft summary he has prepared of our proceedings. It reveals that much has been accomplished over the past two weeks by all delegations and by the assemblage of NGO representatives who have so enriched our deliberations. We have clearly recognized the importance of providing family planning services in the context of reproductive health and rights. Together, I believe we have developed a new appreciation for the close and complex interrelationships of population, the environment, consumption, development, and migration.

We have also been reminded of the need to consider these broad societal issues from the standpoint of individuals -- especially women -- as the particular group most affected. In addition, participants have affirmed the need to better understand families, in all their diversity, and to find ways to strengthen them as they face new pressures. They have recognized:

That men and women must be responsible to one another and give each other mutual support;

The basic human right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children to have access to the necessary education, information, and quality family planning and reproductive health services;

And that all of us must share responsibility for nurturing the next generation and caring for the ageing -- those who gave birth to us.



Since the first international population conference in Bucharest 20 years ago, we have achieved significant and remarkable changes. Even before then, many in this room had already emerged as leaders on these issues. We salute your efforts and your example. Family planning and other reproductive health services are now much more widely available around the world, and both birth and death rates have come down in most regions. We who are assembled here are now ready to take the next steps, and to demonstrate again that by working together we can make a difference. And we must.

Twenty years from now, another generation will take our seats in this hall to prepare for the Fifth World Conference on Population. Delegates to that PrepCom will be asking what we did and how well we met the goals established in Cairo.

They will be asking whether we have undertaken the hard work and careful planning required to translate our good intentions into real changes in programs. They will be asking whether all of us -- developed and developing country governments, international agencies, and NGOs -- have made the long-term commitment of resources necessary to increase the reproductive choices and quality of life for people around the world -- and whether we did so in time to make a difference.

The United States believes that the Cairo Conference will be a milestone. The key will be to engage people -- both women and men -- from all walks of life, within our countries and across the globe. To help maintain momentum and participation, we strongly support recommendations for a systematic program of intersessional consultations. For its part, the United States intends to continue the momentum from here.

During this time, to support our words with deeds, we will accelerate work with our legislative branch to fulfill President Clinton's commitment to broaden our support for reproductive health, family planning and other population programs in our foreign assistance budget. The United States is proud to contribute to meeting this challenge as a global partner, as a willing student, and with a sense of urgency. Together we have much to learn and much to do if we are to successfully translate our vision into concrete programmatic strategies.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate my thanks and appreciation to you and to all participants in this constructive dialogue. Together, we will write a new history for our world. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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