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# B A N G - E S H

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STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
AND  
LEADER OF THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION

AT THE

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NEW YORK, 22 MARCH 1999

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Commission on Population and Development received its expanded mandate since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), with the primary mandate to assess implementation of the Cairo Conference's Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels. Bangladesh, as a member of the Commission, believes that its present session provides important opportunities for the follow-up of ICPD.

The reports of the Secretary-General under various agenda items of the Commission are well prepared and provide useful information for our deliberations. We particularly value the report on world population monitoring – it provides summary of recent information on population growth, structure and distribution. It covers topics on changing population growth, its age structure, population distribution, urbanization and internal migration, poverty, food provision and the environment – some of these, of course, are being appropriately covered in the follow-up of other major UN conferences. This information is useful for our greater understanding of the world population scenario and its dynamics.

To my delegation, the issues on international migration and resources for implementation of Cairo Programme of Action are of particularly importance. I will confine my remarks chiefly to the reports on these issues.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The ICPD, as well as the Copenhagen Summit and the Beijing Conference, all touched upon international migration. This is an emerging issue of primary global interest. Bangladesh is of the view that orderly migration is beneficial for both the sending and the receiving countries. However, a certain degree of misapprehension seems exist in many countries. This results in reluctance to make an in-depth examination of a process that could be mutually beneficial. The ACC Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, held in The Hague last year, threw some light on this complex issue.

We observe from the outcome of symposium that no clear support has been found to the common perception that the chief motivation for migration is economic. Instead, it discovered that the interrelationships between poverty, environmental degradation and international migration are complex, and many stereotyped notions were unfounded.

It is notable that there has been a great increase over the past decade in female migrant workers. In most cases, the risks notwithstanding, the work opportunity has the potential of enhancing their status and contributing to their empowerment. It is a matter of concern that many female migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and harassment in their workplace. The recipient countries should take greater responsibility for their protection. We strongly feel that great attention should be paid to the nature of work of the female migrants, the particular social factors in their environment, and risk elements associated with their jobs.

One area of particular importance is the movement of skilled workers from the developing to the developed countries and the fast growing economies. Their loss from the sending country, after investing in them in education and skill building, and its impact on the absorbing economy require further study. International collaboration is needed to prevent loss of human assets from the investing country through compensatory mechanisms.

The symposium had contributed to our understanding of the dynamics of migration and their effect. Additional studies are necessary to firmly establish the impact of migration on development. In an era of fast-paced economic globalization international migration is bound to increase. I would like to underscore several the findings of the symposium panel on migration: *first*, international cooperation is to be enhanced based on respective concern of different parties; second, ill-conceived control mechanisms, or disproportionate focus on control, which encourages illegal migration, has to be appropriately addressed; and *third*, reliable migration data should be gathered — this will serve to dispel many myths about migration and contribute to better policy formulation. For this, Bangladesh strongly supports holding of an International Conference on Migration and Development (ICMD). Given the importance of the migration to both the developed and developing countries. We hope that delegations will discuss this issue in some details and would be able to agree in principle to the convening of such a conference.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Let me now turn to the Secretary-General's report on resources for implementation of the ICPD Plan of Action. This has been subject to numerous discussions. but I believe it merits our continued attention in all relevant forums.

The Programme of Action estimated that implementation of its population and reproductive health package would cost \$17 billion till 2000, with two-thirds coming from the domestic sources, and one-third from the donor community. Over the years since Cairo we have seen a surge of resource flow in population activities. Unfortunately, the momentum has not been sustained. After the initial two years international assistance flow became stagnant, in the next year it started to taper off. In spite of greater availability of resources since Cairo, it still remained one-third of the estimated requirement — \$5.7 billion against the estimated \$17 billion. It is also significant that domestic resources had been more forthcoming compared to international commitments.

We would like to draw attention to the observation that most resources are mobilized in a few large countries. It highlights the necessity of broadening the resource base. It is a matter of concern that poorer countries were unable to pull together necessary resources; in many cases they remained dependent on external assistance. At the same time, they have the most pressing need to invest in population matters.

We also note that the donor community plays an important role in financing population activities in most developing countries, and that, in some countries, particularly the least developed, funding for population activity is donor-driven. For them, resources should be available on a concessional or grant basis. All countries should strive to meet the committed target for assistance. Otherwise the implementation process of the Cairo Plan of Action, which has been encouraging so far, will start to falter. Given its major responsibility for the follow-up and implementation at the country level, increased resources should be made available to UNFPA.

The implementation of Cairo will suffer a setback without adequate external support at a time when developing countries are committing more resources and increasing their policy support. Mobilization of resources for population and development must be placed high on the global development agenda. We need augmented assistance programmes of the donors, and at the same time make all our efforts to utilize available resources most effectively and efficiently to meet the Conference objectives.

**I thank you Mr. Chairman.**