

**Statement to the Commission on Population and Development
Acting as Preparatory Committee for the Special Session
of the General Assembly**

As written

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR
THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FOR THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**STATEMENT BY Mr. JAIRO MONTOYA,
DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF COLOMBIA**

New York, 24th March, 1999

**STATEMENT BY JAIRO MONTOYA, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF COLOMBIA, AT THE PREPARATORY
COMMITTEE FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

New York, 24th March, 1999

Mr. Chairman:

Let me begin by expressing how pleased my delegation feels in having you as Chairman of this important meeting. I extend my appreciation to the other distinguished members of the Bureau.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat for having prepared the useful documentation that we have before us as a basis for deliberations. The Report of the Secretary General with proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo is an important starting point in this regard.

Mr. Chairman:

The declining of fertility rates, among other factors, has allowed Colombia to reduce its population growth from an annual 2.9% in the period 1973-1985 to 1.8% in the period 1993-1997. Diminishing fertility rates, improvement in health care services and prevention of diseases have also helped in achieving increased levels of life expectancy. The aging of population is also a result of such transformations.

Infant mortality in Colombia was 29.8 per 1,000 live births in 1998, that is to say, 50% below the world average. Maternal mortality for the period 1990-1995 was around 80 per 100,000 live births. In 1998, life expectancy was 64.3 years for men and 73.2 years for women.

In spite of these improvements, there is a need to foster additional changes with both domestic efforts and international support. That is why my delegation attaches particular importance to this preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly.

The International Conference on Population and Development, which took place almost five years ago, constituted an historic landmark for establishing goals and commitments relating to the economic, social and other developmental dimensions of population. An important progress has been recognized since then, in terms of the structure of population, gender issues, reproductive health and international partnerships, among other achievements.

Nevertheless there is also recognition on the need for renewed political commitment in order to overcome different constraints such as those in the financial, institutional and human resources fields. Colombia attaches great emphasis to the revitalization of international cooperation as a fundamental component of population policies, while giving also importance to domestic efforts, including the active participation of civil society.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to underscore some of the matters and actions that my delegation considers of particular priority for the further implementation of the Programme of Action:

1. Intensifying efforts for appropriate linkages between population and other dimensions of development, in particular poverty alleviation, international migration, environmental preservation and sustainable management of resources.
2. Enabling a positive international economic environment so as to face effectively the recent financial turmoil, continued declining commodities prices, growing gaps in income distribution and social consequences derived from natural disasters such as floodings, storms and earthquakes.
3. Fostering dialogue and cooperation on international migration, based on safeguarding the basic human rights of migrants, as well on the issue of internal migration, including the issue of displaced persons by internal conflicts.
4. Investing resources and channeling international support for the design and implementation of policies aimed at addressing the special needs of elderly people; with specific measures for older and poor women.

5. Promoting measures and policies to eradicate all forms of violence against women and children within the context of gender equity, empowerment of women and with special emphasis on the girl child education.
6. Fostering assistance by the international community to support capacity building efforts in developing countries relating to reproductive health programmes.
7. Monitoring market functioning and prices formation with regards to drugs demanded by developing countries to address HIV/AIDS and STDs.
8. Mobilizing external funding necessary to fully realize the vast potential of South-South cooperation in the field of population.
9. Reversing the negative trend in ODA as an essential requisite for achieving effectively the target of a minimum of 4 per cent of ODA that should be devoted to population activities.
10. Increasing voluntary contributions to UNFPA in order to help better countries to meet their population and reproductive health goals.

Mr. Chairman:

By October 1999, the world population will have reached 6 billion. But this growth will be characterized by social and economic imbalances. How to face the lack of basic sanitation, clean water, decent housing and adequate health services affecting enormous sectors of population is one of the biggest challenges. And the greatest expectation for the majority of countries.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.