

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

**As written**



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**STATEMENT  
BY  
MR. SISWANTO AGUS WILOPO  
OF THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION  
AT  
THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
ACTING AS THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON POPULATION DEVELOPMENT**

**24 MARCH 1999**

1. Let me begin by expressing my delegation's congratulations to you on your election as Chairman and to the distinguished Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur. The focus of this meeting is to prepare for the Special Session of the General Assembly which will review progress in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. For this purpose, we appreciate the excellent preparations made by the Secretariat including the comprehensive documentation and reports of the Secretary-General which should help guide our deliberations and make our preparations for the Special Session more meaningful and productive.

2. As the fourth most populist country in the world, Indonesia attaches urgent attention to the critical issues of population and development in general and to the implementation of the commitments made at the Cairo Conference in particular. We therefore, welcome the opportunity provided by the Commission on Population and Development acting as a Preparatory Committee for the Special Session to continue the discourse on population and development issues and to push forward the preparations for the Special Session to be held in June of this year. In this regard, my delegation is pleased in general with the progress made in the preparations for the Special Session and on the basis of such progress, I believe we will be in good position to make realistic proposals and recommendations for the implementation of the Programme of Action over the next 5 years.

3. The particular focus of this meeting of the Commission is to act as a Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly which is to review and appraise implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action five years **after** the Conference. The Programme of Action, which was adopted by consensus by 179 countries, underscores the integral and mutually reinforcing linkages between population and development and endorsed a new rights-based strategy to meet the needs of people rather than solely achieving demographic targets. In fact we in Indonesia have sought to ensure that our development is

primarily a people-centered one and thus consider the people's well-being in addressing the issues of economic development in balance with population growth. At the same time, we should not seek to renegotiate the ICPD POA.

4. Before I comment on some of the key issues in this plenary meeting, let me briefly look at the present context of world population trends and the direction it is taking. According to the Secretary-General's Report, the world population is expected to surpass the 6 billion mark this year. While we can indeed take encouragement from the impressive declines in annual population growth rates, we must also be aware that such declines are in relative terms only. The population is still growing rapidly in absolute terms with the greater proportion of this increase taking place in the developing countries. In my country alone the population will add about 4.7 million of new births this year which by comparison is greater than that of Singapore's entire population. Moreover, there is no denying that demographic structure, particularly regarding age and differences in growth levels between the developed and developing countries, are also rapidly changing. The fact that during 1998 alone about 96% of the total world population growth originated in the least developed regions of the world should be a clear indication of the perils that lie ahead if the international community does not employ greater efforts to implement the goals of the ICPD particularly its development dimensions. If these efforts are not effective, the battle against growing disparities between the developed and developing countries, poverty escalation and instability will become a far greater problem in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Looking back over the past 5 years since Cairo, the early momentum to fulfill the commitments generated at the Conference was rather impressive with considerable progress in policy and programme design as well as in increasing

partnership and collaboration particularly at the national level. In many developing countries, a real awareness has been achieved on the need for family planning and many of the more successful cases of such family planning have been driven to a large extent by the grass-roots level. Yet, these programmes have not been as widespread as is considered necessary. This is largely due to the lack of information, education, communication and services on population matters. Therefore it is important that we build on the successful lessons of some developing countries and make such programmes and information more universally available. To achieve this objective, will, I believe, require strengthened and renewed commitment by the international community to assist the developing countries **through** partnership to help formulate policies and programmes and to help **implement the** provisions of the landmark agreement reached at the Cairo Conference.

6. Despite our firm commitment to implement the Programme of Action of Cairo, the current economic crisis and its resultant political, environmental and social challenges have significantly altered Indonesia's development programme and priorities in the short and medium term. This has caused a **shift** in Government priorities which has also resulted in a change in the **funding** priorities of Indonesia's development partners. Thanks to many donors, including **UNFPA**, World Bank, ADB, **USAID**, CIDA, **AustAID** and other providers of assistance, the adverse impact of the economic crisis on the implementation of the Programme of Action especially in the reproductive and family planning programmes, have been to a certain extent mitigated. Indeed, without their significant help, these **programmes** would have been impossible to achieve.

7. It is in this connection - the revitalization of the commitments undertaken at Cairo - that we expect the Special Session to play a vital role. As we see it, the developing countries, despite major difficulties and setbacks, have

largely fulfilled their commitments undertaken at Cairo. But there has been little or no commensurate fulfillment of the commitments made by the developed countries. Rather, their failure to generate the promised assistance has resulted in serious implications for the developing countries in their efforts to implement the Cairo Programme of Action. Some of these implications are quite formidable. The demographic transition from high to low birth and death rates, which had been well on its way, has suffered a set back with significant backsliding occurring in a number of developing countries. More ominously, the non-fulfillment of commitments by the developed countries has undermined the ability of programmes to move forward. Thus, reversals in past progress have taken place in such critical areas as child and maternal mortality, morbidity as well as the continuing spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS. In fact, despite numerous efforts to reduce the level of maternal mortality, many countries similar to Indonesia are still confronted by high maternal mortality rates and would be unable to achieve the Cairo targets unless stronger commitments are forthcoming and increased efforts are undertaken by the developed countries.

8. Before concluding, let me make a few brief remarks on the Secretary-General's Report on the issues before the Working Group which should begin this afternoon. Since we will be pursuing these issues in the Working Group, I will confine myself to **some** salient points that we believe are lacking in the report. While **many** issues contained in the Report are of particular importance to my delegation, **there are** however a few that have not commanded the attention that they rightly deserve. First, with regard to poverty, economic development and environment, the **draft** report has given greater emphasis to the environment rather than to **poverty** which is of primary importance to the developing countries. Indeed, we have long believed that only through development, including the importance of education for all, can the problems of poverty, population and environment be redressed on a lasting basis. Secondly, the **draft** report should be

strengthened by including the issue and role of the family. The concept of family is a central one for the developing countries, particularly in Asia including Indonesia, for pursuing population development. It is no coincidence that the POA explicitly reflected the role of the family and thus I propose that the **draft** report also focus on this important issue. Thirdly, and also lacking in the present draft report is the crucial issue of the transfer of technology related to the field of population and development including contraceptive technology. As such transfers are explicitly called for in the POA, the ICPD+5 would not be complete if it neglects to consider this important issue for the developing countries. Last but not least, let me draw your attention to the issue of internal and international migration. While the **draft** report does include a sub-chapter on this issue, it pays little attention to urbanization and the vast problems of **mega-cities** and their sprawling self-perpetuating slums. With these few points, which we intend to further pursue in the **Working Group** this afternoon, we have, we believe underlined some of the concerns that the developing countries that would like to see given greater emphasis in the **draft** report.

9. In conclusion, I would just like to say that, since the theme of Cairo greatly underlined the linkages between population concerns and those of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, it is important that our preparations for the Special Session of the General Assembly on implementing the Programme of Action of the conference five years down the road, should concentrate on regenerating the momentum of the Cairo conference at this historical period when our world is being propelled into the new millennium.

**Thank** you.