

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

As written



STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY MISS M. PATRICIA DURRANT, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE 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, MARCH 26, 1999.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I wish to associate my delegation with the Statement delivered earlier by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Review and Appraisal of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) enables us to take stock of the progress achieved so far; to examine its impact; and to agree upon future actions in order to fully realise the goals identified at Cairo.

The Population Division [in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)] and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have contributed greatly to this review process, and in this regard I wish to thank Dr. Nafis Sadik and Mr. Joseph Chamie and their staffs. We recognise the extensive preparations that have already been undertaken, including the convening of a number of round tables, technical and regional meetings. These have proven to be extremely useful in facilitating discussions in key areas, leading up to this review.

Mr. Chairman, the reports presented by the Secretary General are well prepared and provide a good basis for our deliberations. The document we adopt as the outcome of this review process must reaffirm the Programme of Action, and must provide a concrete set of recommendations which can further the goals of achieving universal access to quality and affordable health services, including reproductive health services, family planning and sexual health; significant reductions in infant, child and maternal mortality; ensuring gender equity and equality and women's empowerment; and universal access to primary education.

We hope that this process will lead *inter alia* to:

1. Intensified efforts and commitments to addressing the AIDS pandemic;
2. Addressing the linkages between adolescent fertility and the perpetuation of the poverty cycle;
3. Ensuring that population strategies are geared

towards achieving the goal of poverty eradication;

4. Increased co-operation for capacity-building in developing countries in the area of reproductive health;

Mr. Chairman,

At the regional level, the Caribbean sub-region has been actively preparing for this review process, in collaboration with the ECLAC sub-regional headquarters, CARICOM Secretariat and the UNFPA office for the Caribbean. The Caribbean sub-regional report on population and development which was adopted in November 1998 provides both a review of what has taken place in the region and examines how the Caribbean can proceed in its attempts to fully implementing the ICPD Programme of Action in the subsequent five-year period. The review indicated that despite the limitations of small island states, the lack of availability of new and additional resources, problems of deteriorating conditions in the social sector, increasing income disparities, lack of human and physical resources, the Caribbean region has made strides in its implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past forty years, Jamaica has had to deal squarely with the challenge of population growth; and today enjoys a relatively low rate of population growth, fertility

and infant mortality. This has only been possible because of the partnerships between government, the private sector, the non-governmental community, and academic institutions. We must also express appreciation for the support which our programme has received from bilateral donors and multilateral agencies.

Since Cairo Jamaica has further refined its implement population and development policies and has formulated a National Plan of Action on Population and Development up to the year 2015. The Plan focuses, *inter alia* on the interrelationship between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, reproductive rights and reproductive health, and health, morbidity and mortality. Since 1960, fertility has been reduced from six children per women, to 2.8 per women in 1997. However, adolescent fertility still remains a critical problem, which we are seeking to address.

Mr. Chairman,

Developing countries have demonstrated their commitment to implementing the Programme of Action by formulating new, or revising existing national population and development policies in line with ICPD goals; and have allocated already scarce resources to fulfil their commitments. Of grave concern, is the harsh reality

that the resource goal of \$17 billion for the year 2000 is still very elusive.

We concur with the views of the Secretary-General (in document E/CN.9/1999/4) that resource mobilisation for population and development must be listed high on the global development agenda. With effects of both global and internal financial crises, coupled with the limited ability of local production and marketing systems to compete internationally, Governments are hard-pressed to achieve the goals and recommendations of the ICPD.

Mr. Chairman, the ICPD was a watershed for global population and development initiatives. This preparatory process therefore comes at a critical juncture. The attainment of the goals of the ICPD is incumbent upon our ability to take concrete action. At the end of this review process, we should have moved forward with a practical set of recommendations which will guide our actions at the international, regional, and national levels, into the new millennium,