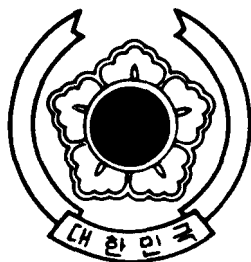


**Statement to the Commission on Population and Development
Acting as Preparatory Committee for the Special Session
of the General Assembly**

As written



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Statement

by

H.E. Mr. SUH Dae-won
Deputy Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Korea

at

The Preparatory Committee for the UNGASS
for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation
of the Programme of Action of the ICPD

24 March 1999
New York

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, let me congratulate you on your election as a Chairman of this important meeting. My appreciation should go to the Secretariat for its efficient work in preparing this Prepcom meeting. I am confident that the documents by the Secretariat serve as a good basis for our deliberations envisaging tangible outcome at the forthcoming UNGASS.

The 1994 ICPD held in Cairo marked a historical turning point in tackling population issues in a comprehensive manner. The message **from** Cairo is unambiguous that population is not about numbers, but about human beings. To materialize new vision established in Cairo, innovative approaches have been initiated at the global as well as national levels. We are gathered here in New York to take stock of the progress so far and to clearly map out concrete programmes on key priority issues.

We have, indeed, witnessed notable changes in the population policies in many countries. Ever increasing trends of the partnership between public and private sectors are also encouraging. Overall, impressive progress has been made at the global level, inter-alia, for the reduction of maternal and child mortality and fertility rates, establishment of successful birth control programmes, expansion of reproductive health care systems and empowerment of women.

Notwithstanding such commendable achievements, we are still faced with daunting challenges. Indeed, the progress in the implementation of the Cairo Action Program has proven to be geographically uneven. Most of the **LDCs** have been reported to lag far behind the desired targets. To make matters worse, financial crises and continued economic stagnation as well as frequently recurring natural disasters have contributed to weakening political will for the advancement of the Cairo commitments in many developing countries. Against this backdrop, we are committed to harnessing the Special Session of the General Assembly for revitalizing our commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to highlight our views on several issues relating to further implementation of the Cairo Action Programme:

First, growing world population still poses serious problems. Even though many parts of the world have achieved a considerable decrease in fertility rates, the world population is still growing by 77 million a year. Family planning services, in particular, in developing countries should therefore be made widely available for the reduction of fertility growth rates. Moreover, the Cairo commitments should be effectively implemented so that all **governments** can provide their people with proper reproductive health care no later than 2015.

Second, the changing population structure should be regarded as a critical area of concerns. The impact of demographic changes on socio-economic structures should be fully examined so that societies are better equipped with proper policy tools and institutions to address a wide array of problems. In developing public social policies, more money should be diverted to establish a social safety net for the aging generation.

Third, new approaches to reproductive health care should be one of the important caveats provided for in the Cairo Action Programme. Since 1994, many countries have been encouraged to adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to reproductive health care. Such approach has contributed not only to lowering fertility rates but also to preventing problems related to sexual activity among adolescents. However, more efforts need to be made for setting reproductive health care as priority policy area. Furthermore, in order to provide adequate reproductive health care system, more holistic approach at national level should also be explored. The issue of unsafe abortion remains serious problems. Preventive measures and appropriate services need to be urgently provided in order to prevent women from falling victim to unsafe abortions. Considering increased sexual activities and childbearing cases during adolescence, sexual and reproductive health care for them deserves particular attention. Information exchange and education focused on responsible sexual behavior among teenagers should be more systematically promoted in this regard.

Fourth, enhancing gender equality and empowerment of women are still at the heart of our commitments. Without improving the status of women, we cannot expect real progress in our path to achieving sustainable development. Women are recognized as fundamental force in eradicating poverty and maintaining the stability of families and societies. Our common efforts for the implementation of the Cairo commitments should thus be envisaged for enhancing correct understanding on the role of women.

Last but not least, it is frustrating to note that, even with significantly increased assistance from developed countries, financial commitments made in Cairo have yet been fulfilled at both national and global levels, due to continued decline of ODA and unexpected financial crises in many developing countries. I hope sincerely that UNGASS should provide a momentum to revitalize political commitments for mobilizing financial resources required for the Cairo commitments.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

The challenges towards this meeting are enormous. It is my sincere hope that constructive dialogue over next five days could lay out solid basis for the successful outcome of the forthcoming UNGASS. To this end, we must rededicate ourselves to building consensus on a number of thorny issues for crafting out future strategies. As usual, in the spirit of global partnership, my delegation is committed to taking an active part in this process.

Thank you.