

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

As written



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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Honourable Minister of Health
Federal Republic of Nigeria

At the

Preparatory Committee of the Special Session of the UNGA
on ICPD Follow-up

New York

March 26, 1999

Mr. Chairman,

I bring to you and this gathering greetings of joy and best wishes from my Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, H. E. General Abdulsalami Abubakar. The fact that he has asked me to lead the Nigerian delegation to this preparatory committee work of the Commission on Population and Development, as fore-runner to the special session of the General Assembly, testifies to the high priority which his Administration attaches to the issue of population, generally, and to the Plan of Action of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), in particular.

Mr. Chairman,

Like the other speakers before me, let me congratulate you and the rest of your Bureau for your well-deserved election. We are confident in your wisdom and ability to guide our deliberations well into a fruitful conclusion. The organizers of this session- from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Population Division, right to the Secretariat- deserve our deep appreciation for their leadership role in the ICPD+5 review process, **more so** for engendering a partnership and mutual commitment which does not keep **away** non-governmental **organizaations** and young people. For indeed, the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Let me also assure you that my delegation is fully aligned to **the** statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. While I do not intend to bother you with details, as indeed was agreed at Cairo in 1994 that no area of

agreement there would be re-opened for re-negotiation, my delegation will like to add a few comments to the statement of the G-77 and thus highlight my country's situation for a richer understanding and international cooperative measures.

Mr. Chairman,

We were at Cairo in ~~1994~~ and fully subscribed to the agreements reached there. As a delegation, we also took active interest in The Hague Forum, just a few weeks ago.

But as may be recalled, my country has gone through some painful experience during the past decade, a period characterized by political crisis with resultant international sanctions and dwindling foreign exchange earnings, over which hangs a heavy debt burden. Whereas such hostile political and socio-economic environment would not readily conduce to sound human resource development in any country, Nigeria **has** forged ahead in providing the resources required for its health sector programmes and for the sustenance of UNFPA assistance.

Better still, with the transition to democratic **rule** almost complete by the Abubakar Administration, Nigeria is **poised to** play out more effectively its expected role in the United Nations system and **programmes**. Before long, we look forward 'to a substantial increase in my country's financial contributions to UNFPA, which we know can also have positive spill-over impact on the age, structure, and development of the Nigerian population.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has studied, the Secretary-General's Report (E/CN.9/1999/PC4) and the Draft Proposals for Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We have noted the key elements in the proposals namely: Population and development concerns, such as changing age structure and ageing of ~~the~~ population; Internal and international migration, Population and Poverty, economic development and the environment, Population and Education; Gender equality, equity and empowerment of women; ensuring reproductive rights and promoting reproductive and sexual health; ensuring access to quality family planning services; reducing maternal mortality, preventing and treating HIV/AIDS; Partnerships and collaborations. All these are very vital elements.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is actively involved in the informal discussions going on alongside our debate. Several factors need to be considered in reaching agreement as to what the outcome of this preparatory process should present to the special session of the General Assembly in June. For instance, as a country which loves good **neighbourliness** and promotes the cause of international peace as well as playing host to refugees, Nigeria would welcome a provision in the outcome which demands, among other things, orderliness and peacefulness in the area of internal and international migration. There is cultural relativity, which should be seriously considered too in the issues of the aged in view of the benefits of the extended family system existing in most developing countries.

Similarly, we would want due emphasis placed on education since eradication of illiteracy and promotion of environmental protection will avert or reduce most of the diseases and ailments affecting the population in developing countries. Since the achievement of all these goals depends on funding, the outcome of our preparatory work should emphasize the mobilizing of resources, especially financial resources which developing countries direly need.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me re-assure our gathering that my country stands ready, more than ever before, to play its part on the vital issue of population and development both at home and at the multilateral level in full partnership with other stakeholders in these days of globalization and interdependency of the human race.

I thank you.