

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

As written

**Preparatory Committee for the special session of the UN General
Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the
Programme of Action of the ICPD**

**Statement by Mr. BALLA MUSA SILLA, Executive Director of
“PARTNERS IN POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT”**

New York, 26 March 1999

Mr. Chairman:

We thank you for this opportunity to address the delegations attending this Preparatory Committee.

At the outset, let me brief the audience about the objectives and major activities of “Partners in Population and Development”. We are an intergovernmental initiative devoted to the promotion of South-South co-operation in the fields of population and reproductive health. The initiative was launched in Cairo in 1994, on the occasion of the ICPD, as an alliance of countries with deep experience in the above-mentioned fields, and with a commitment to share that experience with other developing countries.

Today, Partners has grown to 14 member countries. Ten countries came together in Cairo five years ago: Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. Four more countries have since joined them: China, Pakistan, India, and most recently Uganda. The Partners have established a Secretariat in Dhaka. The Government of Bangladesh has made generous contributions to host the Secretariat, which counts also on UNFPA’s administrative support.

Mr. Chairman:

In Cairo, the Partners made a commitment to share expertise on population and reproductive health so as to improve the quality of life in developing countries. We are fulfilling this commitment. Examples of

initiatives launched by Partners over the past five years abound. Let me highlight three of them:

1. Partners has facilitated the funding of 14 projects in South-South activities. The funds have been channelled directly to the beneficiary Governments and NGOs.
2. Partners has made available rosters of institutions and experts from the member countries who can provide technical assistance or training to other developing countries. The rosters will be updated on a regular basis.
3. Partners has developed country profiles which document the successful experiences of member countries. The profiles of Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Morocco, & Tunisia and Egypt have been finalised.

In defining its strategy, Partners has adopted 5 priority work areas: integration of family planning and reproductive health services, services for adolescents, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality. Additionally, the promotion of gender perspectives has been adopted as a cross cutting priority.

Mr. Chairman:

The report that the Secretary General has submitted to this Preparatory Committee refers to South-South cooperation as a means of implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We are pleased to note that, in line with that Programme, Chapter IV of the Secretary General's report (paragraphs 110, 116 and 123) calls for further action on and financial support to South-South cooperation.

We are all well aware that the financial targets to implement the Programme of Action have not been met. Developing countries are doing their share but they need much greater support from the international community. To this effect, sound mechanisms exist. Partners is an effective and efficient instrument for the implementation of the Programme of Action. Donor investments can be maximised through our ability to adapt and rapidly apply well-tested approaches to improving and expanding reproductive health services.

A group of bilateral, multilateral and private donors have already recognised the long-term value of investing in Partners. We are grateful

to them. Partners member countries have agreed in making a mandatory annual financial contribution, in addition to their in kind contribution to South-South activities.

However, in the long run, the financial commitment of developing countries should be the real basis for the Partners' sustainability. It is necessary that, as South-South mechanisms gain the interest of more developing countries, their contributions become the major financial source for these activities. The social, political and technical benefits derived from well-focussed exchanges among developing countries will exceed by far those contributions.

Mr. Chairnan:

Our task is by no means over. We will succeed if we enhance partnerships among all the actors in the South-South approach: governments, NGOs, funding agencies, and most importantly, the people whom we serve. We hope the outcome of this PREPCOM will reflect effective means to do so.

Thank you.