

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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**PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE ICPD + 5 PROCESS  
24-31 MARCH 1999,  
STATEMENT BY WORLD INFORMATION TRANSFER, INC.**

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

**World Information Transfer, Inc. places great emphasis on the health of children first. Healthy children are the nation's future, therefore, we must first recognize the primacy of children's rights. We can start by implementing laws that would provide a responsible family for every child that is born. A family that is aware of the needs of every child, not as a slave to its own existence blinding that child to traditions that negate health, but as an individual with rights of its own. The cooperation of government officials, business leaders, the medical establishment, educators, religious leaders, NGOs, and families in need is required to maintain a full support network to help secure each child its avowed human rights. In every country, meeting housing and food needs is expensive. The cost would be limited if governments recognized that their primary interest lies in the future, that is, in producing children who are physically and mentally healthy and capable of becoming productive, creative citizens.**

**No nation can maintain a healthy economy when significant parts of its population are malnourished or traumatized or suffering the effects of chronic exposure to pollutants. It is in the interest of governments to provide basic needs to its citizens as a means of protecting the health of all.**

**In the past five years, since the ICPD in Cairo, scientific research has more clearly revealed the human health impacts of environmental contamination. We have indisputable evidence of rising rates of cancers, tuberculosis, lung diseases, and reproductive impairments, as well as the appearance of vector borne diseases in areas not previously afflicted.**

**One critical consequence of maintaining traditional practices and viewpoints is the deterioration of human health around the world. When we understand our culture and history, we enhance our capacity to respond creatively to our present problems. Although we are all formed by our culture, we are not enslaved by it. We must use our endowed creativity to reach beyond the cultural and traditional control of practices that doom humankind to repeat its past mistakes, learn from those mistakes and move in new directions.**

**Children are key when pursuing a future of equity and social justice. Mothers are key to the lives of their children and to the building of healthy families and populations. The most sustainable investment we can make in healthy populations is to take proper care of our children's health. -- Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, 1997**