



PAKISTAN

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Statement

by

**Mr. Muhammad Sharif
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On Agenda Item 4

**National Experience in Population Matters: Population
Distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and
Development.**

41st Session of the Commission on Population Development
New York

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**Pakistan's statement to the 41st Session of the Commission on Population Development- 8
April 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me at the outset congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on election to the 41st session of the Commission on Population Development. I assure you of our full cooperation and support during this session.

2. My delegation aligns with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G 77 and China earlier in the session.

3. It is a singular honour to be a part of this international gathering that provides us an opportunity to share our national experiences in population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development.

4. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on priority theme of the Commission. The reports suggest that more than half of the world's population will be living in urban areas, for the first time in history, during 2008. This urban transformation would have significant economic, social, demographic and environmental impact, particularly in developing countries where increase in urban population is large and occurring at a fast pace. We have noted the element of positive correlation between urbanization and development in the reports. This relation, however, is not spontaneous and need a careful analysis, data collection, research and discussion.

5. Let me also take this opportunity to appreciate the role of UNFPA in the advancement of goals and objectives of the Commission. UNFPA supports key population, urbanization and sustainable development activities at the global, regional and country levels. It is also one of the major sources of financial and technical assistance to the population programmes in Pakistan. Our long lasting partnership with UNFPA dates back to 1971, when UNFPA opened its first office in Pakistan. Since then six country programmes have been jointly implemented and the 7th Country Program (2004-2008) is successfully going on. Following the ICPD Plan of Action and National Population Policy, the main objective of the 7th Country Programme is to lead toward population stabilization and sustainable human development with focus on Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and poverty reduction.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world and as indicated in the report it is presently contributing 1.8 percent of global urban population. In terms of population size, with current population of 160 million, Pakistan is the 4th largest country in Asia and 2nd amongst the SAARC countries. It is also categorized among 25 countries which host three quarters of the 3.3 billion urban dwellers in the world.

7. Like other countries, in Pakistan, the migration from rural areas to urban cities is on the rise. The urban population has doubled from 17.8% in 1951 to 34% in 2005. The focus of Government's policy, therefore, is to generate work opportunities in both urban and rural areas. To slow down the pace of internal migration from rural to urban areas, more work opportunities are being created in rural areas. The government is making efforts to promote indigenous industrial sector, provide food security and local resource mobilization. Establishing tax free zones for industrial sector, subsidiary in various inputs and credit schemes with low mark up are some of the initiatives taken by the government to promote agriculture sector.

8. Government has also prioritized its agenda to provide basic necessities of life in rural areas such as roads, electricity, gas, telephone and water supply etc. During the last seven years (2000-06) 67.2 % additional employments were created in rural areas as compared to 32.8% in urban areas. Simultaneously health and educational facilities are also being expanded in rural areas. Upgrading the quality of life in rural areas and increasing the job opportunities are the areas receiving more attention. This is certainly affecting the urban-rural migration.

9. In cities increasing urban population is intensifying the pressure on already stressed urban employment situation, proper housing, food supply and clean water and sanitation facilities. On the other hand the average actual annual population growth rate of urban areas is continuously declining due to higher literacy rate, awareness and availability of Family Planning/RH services. Unless supported by vigorous policy interventions, the positive role of urbanization could be overshadowed by the deterioration of the physical environment, widening gap between demand and supply of essential services and lack of infrastructure.

10. Responding to these challenges, Government of Pakistan has formulated various policies in the areas of population, health, environment and education by integrating population concerns into development strategies. Pakistan's Population Policy seeks to attain a balance between population and resources. Its goals are set out in three major areas of the ICPD which includes expanded access to education, particularly for girls, reduced mortality rates and increased access to quality reproductive health services and family planning.

11. This policy sets out a broad framework that provides a futuristic vision to achieve the ultimate aim of economic development by raising the quality of life of the common man and women through focusing on family planning under the umbrella of reproductive health especially in rural areas. The policy is the outcome of a participatory process and enjoys consensus of all stakeholders including NGOs and civil society.

12. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate that Pakistan is fully committed to the goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population Development. Our objectives are clearly articulated and we are confident and prepared to accept current challenges and to achieve international commitments.

I thank you all.