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Explanation of Position by Robert S. Hagen, Acting U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council, adoption of the resolution on Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development, at the 41st Session of the Commission on Population and Development, April 11, 2008

Mr. Chairman, we would like to thank our colleagues in the Population Division, UNFPA, and the Bureau for their support in preparing and conducting the 41st session of the CPD. We would especially like to express our thanks and congratulations to our excellent facilitator, Mr. Frederick Matwang'a. His calm demeanor, skilled diplomacy, and sense of humor guided us to a successful consensus on the resolution for this session, something we thought earlier today might not be achieved. We would note, however, that while we consider the resolution a success, we also believe that future resolutions would benefit from being shorter and more sharply focused on the theme of the session.

Mr. Chairman, we are pleased to join consensus on the adoption of this resolution with the following Explanation of Position.

First, the International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action expresses important political goals the United States endorses. We reaffirm the goals and objectives of the ICPD Program of Action and its Key Actions for further implementation based on the understanding that, while these documents constitute an important policy framework, they do not create international rights or legally binding obligations on states under international law.

Second, the United States further understands that references to reproductive health, and all associated terms in the resolution before us, do not create any new international human rights and cannot be interpreted to constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the United States recognizes the important role of increased financial resources, including official development assistance, to help promote economic growth in developing countries. We believe, however, that the assistance suggested in operative paragraph 13 can only be effective in the context of an appropriate national policy mix designed to mobilize domestic resources, increase productivity, encourage the private sector, and attract and make effective use of international investment. Foreign assistance, in the context of good governance and sound domestic policy, can play a catalytic role. It cannot, however, substitute for the more significant financial flows available through trade, foreign investment, capital market credits, and domestic resources. These largely private sector flows fuel economic growth and development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.