

CHAPTER 9

Population, development and education

SUMMARY

The Programme of Action emphasized the importance of achieving universal access to quality education, in particular primary and technical education and job training, both for combating illiteracy and for eliminating gender disparities. It also called on Governments to introduce into school curricula the subjects of population and sustainable development, health including reproductive health, and gender equity. In meeting population and development objectives, Governments were asked to focus on education and other voluntary measures rather than incentives and disincentives, and all members of society were urged to appreciate the significance and relevance of population-related issues. Key objectives were to encourage attitudes in favour of responsible behaviour in population and development, and to ensure political commitment to population and development issues by national Governments.

Although only one resolution dealt explicitly with the subject of population, development and education, numerous other resolutions addressed it in the context of the Commission's thematic sessions. In general, the Commission has re-emphasized the right to quality education for all with a focus on providing equal opportunities for women and girls, stressing that education and health, including reproductive health, can enhance individual contributions to sustainable development.

Given new and emerging population trends, recent resolutions have recognized the educational needs of special groups, such as older persons and migrants. For example, the resolution of the fortieth session of the Commission in 2007 recognized the growing number of older persons, many with minimal literacy and numeracy, and called on Governments to provide continuing education and encourage lifelong learning. The same resolution called for expansion of educational and professional opportunities in the field of geriatrics and gerontology for all health professionals in response to the needs of older persons. For the first time in 2006, during its thirty-ninth session, the resolution of the Commission addressed the adverse impacts of the migration of highly skilled persons and those with advanced education on the development efforts of developing countries. The resolution of the forty-sixth session of the Commission in 2013 called further for the establishment of codes of practice aimed at preventing and restricting recruitment of professionals from developing countries experiencing shortages in key industries in order to strengthen the health systems in those countries.

EXCERPTS FROM THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Chapter XI: Population, Development and Education[§]

A. Education, population and sustainable development

Objectives

11.5. The objectives are:

(a) To achieve universal access to quality education, with particular priority being given to primary and technical education and job training, to combat illiteracy and to eliminate gender disparities in access to, retention in, and support for, education;

(b) To promote non-formal education for young people, guaranteeing equal access for women and men to literacy centres;

(c) To introduce and improve the content of the curriculum so as to promote greater responsibility and awareness on the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues, including reproductive health; and gender equity.

Actions

11.6. The eradication of illiteracy is one of the prerequisites for human development. All countries should consolidate the progress made in the 1990s towards providing universal access to primary education, as agreed upon at the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. All countries should further strive to ensure the complete access to primary school or an equivalent level of education by both girls and boys as quickly as possible, and in any case before the year 2015. Attention should also be given to the quality and type of education, including recognition of traditional values. Countries that have achieved the goal of universal primary education are urged to extend education and training to, and facilitate access to and completion of education at secondary school and higher levels.

11.7. Investments in education and job training should be given high priority in development budgets at all levels, and should take into account the range and level of future workforce skill requirements.

11.8. Countries should take affirmative steps to keep girls and adolescents in school by building more community schools, by training teachers to be more gender sensitive, by providing scholarships and other appropriate incentives and by sensitizing parents to the value of educating girls, with a view to closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005. Countries should also supplement those efforts by making full use of non-formal education opportunities. Pregnant adolescents should be enabled to continue their schooling.

11.9. To be most effective, education about population issues must begin in primary school and continue through all levels of formal and non-formal education, taking into account the rights and responsibilities of parents and the needs of children and adolescents. Where such programmes already exist, curricula should be reviewed, updated and broadened with a view to ensuring adequate coverage of such important concerns as gender sensitivity, reproductive choices and responsibilities, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. To ensure acceptance of population education programmes by the community, population education projects should emphasize consultation with parents and community leaders.

11.10. Efforts in the training of population specialists at the university level should be strengthened and the incorporation of content relating to demographic variables and their interrelationships with development planning in the social and economic disciplines, as well as to health and the environment, should be encouraged.

[§] The Holy See expressed a general reservation on this chapter. The reservation is to be interpreted in terms of the statement made by the representative of the Holy See at the 14th plenary meeting, on 13 September 1994.

B. Population information, education and communication

Objectives

11.15. The objectives are:

(a) To increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and commitment at all levels of society so that families, couples, individuals, opinion and community leaders, non-governmental organizations, policy makers, Governments and the international community appreciate the significance and relevance of population-related issues, and take the responsible actions necessary to address such issues within sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development;

(b) To encourage attitudes in favour of responsible behaviour in population and development, especially in such areas such environment, family, sexuality, reproduction, gender and racial sensitivity;

(c) To ensure political commitment to population and development issues by national Governments in order to promote the participation of both public and private sectors at all levels in the design, implementation and monitoring of population and development policies and programmes;

(d) To enhance the ability of couples and individuals to exercise their basic right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.

Actions

11.16. Information, education and communication efforts should raise awareness through public education campaigns on such priority issues as: safe motherhood, reproductive health and rights, maternal and child health and family planning, discrimination against and valorization of the girl child and persons with disabilities; child abuse; violence against women; male responsibility; gender equality; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; responsible sexual behaviour; teenage pregnancy; racism and xenophobia; ageing populations; and unsustainable consumption and production patterns. More education is needed in all societies on the implications of population-environment relationships, in order to influence behavioural change and consumer lifestyles and to promote sustainable management of natural resources. The media should be a major instrument for expanding knowledge and motivation.

11.17. Elected representatives at all levels, the scientific community, religious, political, traditional and community leaders, non-governmental organizations, parents' associations, social workers, women's groups, the private sector, qualified communication specialists and others in influential positions should have access to information on population and sustainable development and related issues. They should promote understanding of the issues addressed in the present Programme of Action and mobilize public opinion in support of the actions proposed.

11.18. Members of Parliament are invited to continue to promote wide awareness on issues related to population and sustainable development and to ensure the enactment of legislation necessary for effective implementation of the present Programme of Action.

11.19. A coordinated strategic approach to information, education and communication should be adopted in order to maximize the impact of various information, education and communication activities, both modern and traditional, which may be undertaken on several fronts by various actors and with diverse audiences. It is especially important that information, education and communication strategies be linked to, and complement, national population and development policies and strategies and a full range of services in reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, in order to enhance the use of those services and improve the quality of counselling and care.

11.20. Information, education and communication activities should rely on up-to-date research findings to determine information needs and the most effective culturally acceptable ways of reaching intended audiences. To that end, professionals experienced in the traditional and non-traditional media should be enlisted. The participation of the intended audiences in the design, implementation and monitoring of information, education and communication activities should be ensured so as to enhance the relevance and impact of those activities.

11.21. The interpersonal communication skills — in particular, motivational and counselling skills — of public, private and non-governmental organization service providers, community leaders, teachers, peer groups and others should be strengthened, whenever possible, to enhance interaction and quality assurance in the delivery of reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health services. Such communication should be free from coercion.

11.22. The tremendous potential of print, audiovisual and electronic media, including databases and networks such as the United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN), should be harnessed to disseminate technical information and to promote and strengthen understanding of the relationships between population, consumption, production and sustainable development.

11.23. Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should make greater and more effective use of the entertainment media, including radio and television soap operas and drama, folk theatre and other traditional media to encourage public discussion of important but sometimes sensitive topics related to the implementation of the present Programme of Action. When the entertainment media — especially dramas — are used for advocacy purposes or to promote particular lifestyles, the public should be so informed, and in each case the identity of sponsors should be indicated in an appropriate manner.

11.24. Age-appropriate education, especially for adolescents, about the issues considered in the present Programme of Action should begin in the home and community and continue through all levels and channels of formal and non-formal education, taking into account the rights and responsibilities of parents and the needs of adolescents. Where such education already exists, curricula and educational materials should be reviewed, updated and broadened with a view to ensuring adequate coverage of important population-related issues and to counteract myths and misconceptions about them. Where no such education exists, appropriate curricula and materials should be developed. To ensure acceptance, effectiveness and usefulness by the community, education projects should be based on the findings of socio-cultural studies and should involve the active participation of parents and families, women, youth, the elderly and community leaders.

11.25. Governments should give priority to the training and retention of information, education and communication specialists, especially teachers, and of all others involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of information, education and communication programmes. It is necessary to train specialists who can contribute to the important conceptual and methodological development of education concerning population and related issues. Therefore, systems for professional training should be created and strengthened with specializations that prepare them to work effectively with Governments and with non-governmental organizations active in this field. In addition, there should be greater collaboration between the academic community and other entities in order to strengthen conceptual and methodological work and research in this field.

11.26. To enhance solidarity and to sustain development assistance, all countries need to be continuously informed about population and development issues. Countries should establish information mechanisms, where appropriate, to facilitate the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of population-related information at the national and international levels, and networks should be established or strengthened at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to promote information and experience exchange.

EXCERPTS FROM RESOLUTIONS AND ENTIRE RESOLUTION

Entire resolution:

- Resolution 2003/1 – Population, education and development

Resolution 1996/2[†]

Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development

[...]

10. *Emphasizes* the importance of information, education and communication as a strategy for furthering follow-up action on the International Conference on Population and Development, particularly in the areas of reproductive rights and reproductive health, and urges the Population Division to highlight efforts of Governments in this regard in relevant reports prepared by the Commission;

[...]

[†] This resolution was recommended by the Commission on Population and Development to the Economic and Social Council for adoption and was subsequently adopted by the Council.

Resolution 2003/1
Population, education and development

The Commission on Population and Development,

Reaffirming the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹ in particular those recommendations relating to population, education and development,

Reaffirming also the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in particular those relating to population, education and development,²

Reaffirming further the Beijing Platform for Action³ and the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration⁴ and the Platform for Action adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, in particular those recommendations relating to population, education and development,⁵

Noting the importance of education, especially of young persons and in particular of girls and women, to achieving population and development goals and the contribution, to this end, of the relevant United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative,

Bearing in mind the objectives relevant to population, education and development of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁶ and the outcome of other major United Nations conferences and summits and their reviews, in particular those relevant to population, education and development,

Bearing in mind also the recommendations relevant to population, education and development of the World Education Forum and the World Conference on Education for All⁷ and the designation of 2003-2012 as the United Nations Literacy Decade,⁸

Noting the critical linkages between population, education and development,

Noting with concern the reported recent decline in resource flows for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,

1. *Requests* the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to continue its research and the United Nations Population Fund to continue its programming, in close cooperation with all relevant bodies, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the linkages between population, education and development, including the relationships between population factors and the attainment of the goals of Education for All, giving attention to the way in which education interacts with health, particularly sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and to the way in which education influences the levels, trends and differentials of mortality, fertility, distribution and mobility, and the role of population and development policies, as well as gender inequalities, in such levels, trends and differentials;

2. *Also requests* the Population Division to work in close cooperation with all relevant bodies, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to contribute its research findings to the implementation of the outcomes relevant to population, education and development of the United Nations conferences and summits;

3. *Further requests* that the findings from that and related research on population, education and development should contribute to the next review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development¹ and, as appropriate, to other relevant conferences and reviews, including the World Summit for the Information Society and the regular reviews of the Dakar Declaration and the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS;⁹

4. *Encourages* the Population Division, in close cooperation with all relevant bodies, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, to disseminate widely the results of its research, as a contribution to greater understanding and awareness of the interrelationships between population, education and development;

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5. *Encourages* the United Nations Population Fund, in close cooperation with relevant partners, to continue its support for population, education and development programmes so as to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

¹ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

² See General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex II.E.

³ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁴ *Ibid.*, annex I.

⁵ See General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

⁷ See *Final Report*, World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000 (Paris, UNESCO, 2000).

⁸ See General Assembly resolution 56/116.

⁹ General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

Resolution 2005/1

Population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty

[...]

14. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring that young women and men have access to information, education, including peer education and youth-specific HIV education, sexual education and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection and reproductive ill health, in full partnership with young persons, parents, families, educators and health-care providers;

[...]

Resolution 2005/2

Contribution of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in all its aspects, to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

[...]

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of integrating the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 set at the International Conference on Population and Development into strategies to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, in particular those related to improving maternal health, reducing infant and child mortality, promoting gender equality, combating HIV/AIDS, eradicating poverty and achieving universal access to primary education;

[...]

Resolution 2006/2

International migration and development

[...]

14. *Reiterates* the need to consider how the migration of highly skilled persons and those with advanced education impacts the development efforts of developing countries;

[...]

Resolution 2007/1

Changing age structures of populations and their implications for development

[...]

7. *Reaffirms* the resolve, expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, are able to complete a full course of primary schooling, *urges* Governments to provide young people with opportunities for obtaining further education, acquiring skills and participating fully in all aspects of society, with a view, inter alia, to improving their productive employment and helping them to lead self-sufficient lives, and *recalls* that a knowledge-based society also requires that policies be instituted to ensure life-long access to education and training;

8. *Expresses its concern* that at the present time developing countries have a large number of persons reaching old age with minimal literacy and numeracy, which limits their capacity to earn a livelihood and may thus influence their enjoyment of health and well-being;

9. *Reaffirms* the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000, and underlines the importance of the Education for All partnership as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015;

[...]

14. *Also encourages* Governments, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to enhance, through appropriate mechanisms the self-reliance of older persons, including: where appropriate, the promotion of a continued participation in working life, if desired, inter alia, by promoting a new approach to retirement that takes the needs of the employees, as well as the employers into account, in particular by applying the principle of flexible retirement policies and practices while maintaining acquired pension rights; the creation of conditions that promote the quality of life of older persons and enable them to work and live independently in their own communities as long as possible or desired; the provision of continuing education and the encouragement of life-long learning; and the ensuring of equal access to high-quality health and social services;

[...]

18. *Recalls* the worldwide need to expand educational opportunities in the field of geriatrics and gerontology for all health professionals who work with older persons and to improve information and training for health professionals and paraprofessionals on the needs of older persons, and in this context acknowledges the need to enhance international cooperation;

[...]

Resolution 2009/1

The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

[...]

24. *Also encourages* Governments to increase and strengthen or, where necessary, develop and implement information, education and communication strategies, programmes and actions to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and commitment at all levels of society, including among young people, on issues of priority in regard to population and development, and to ensure that all segments of the population, including those who are in vulnerable situations, are taken into account in such strategies;

[...]

28. *Calls upon* Governments, with the help of the international community, as needed, to achieve universal access to quality education, with particular priority given to primary and technical education and job training, to combat illiteracy and to eliminate gender disparities in access to, retention in and support for primary and secondary education and to promote non-formal education for young people, guaranteeing equal access for women and men to literacy centres, in order to benefit fully from the demographic dividend;

[...]

**Resolution 2010/1
Health, morbidity, mortality and development**

[...]

11. *Emphasizes* that advances in health depend, among other factors, on the promotion and protection of all human rights, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of gender-based discrimination, especially by ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in education, employment and access to social services, including health services; by instituting zero tolerance regarding violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation or cutting; by preventing child and forced marriage; and by ensuring women's and men's access to the means to determine the number and spacing of their children;

[...]

22. *Emphasizes* the role of education and health literacy in improving health outcomes over a lifetime, and urges Governments to ensure that health education starts early in life and that special attention is paid to encouraging health-enhancing behaviour among adolescents and young people in a gender-sensitive manner, especially by discouraging the use of tobacco and alcohol, encouraging physical activity and balanced diets, and providing information on sexual and reproductive health that is consistent with their evolving needs and capacities so that they can make responsible and informed decisions in all issues related to their health and well-being and understand the synergies between the various health-related behaviours;

[...]

**Resolution 2011/1
Fertility, reproductive health and development**

[...]

17. *Calls upon* Governments to further strive to ensure the complete access to primary school or an equivalent level of education by both girls and boys as quickly as possible, and urges countries to extend education and training to secondary and higher school levels, and to facilitate access to and completion of education at those levels;

[...]

**Resolution 2012/1
Adolescents and youth**

[...]

18. *Urges* Member States to improve and actively support opportunities for young people to gain access to productive employment and decent work, including through investment in youth employment programmes, youth-adult partnerships entrepreneurship and other income generation strategies, active labour markets, public-private partnerships and other measures to facilitate the participation of young people in labour markets, in accordance with States' respective national laws and international obligations and commitments, and to reinforce links between national development strategies and policies on education, training, social integration and mobility, taking into account gender equality and the empowerment of women;

19. *Also urges* Member States to address the high rates of youth unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment and informal employment by developing and implementing targeted and integrated national youth employment policies for inclusive job creation, improved employability, skill development and vocational training to meet specific labour market needs of youth, including young migrants, and increased entrepreneurship, including the development of networks of young entrepreneurs at the international, regional, national and local levels, which foster knowledge among young people about their rights and responsibilities in society, and in this regard request donors, specialized United National entities and the private sector to continue to provide assistance, including technical and funding support, as required;

20. *Encourages* Member States to meet the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in the areas of education, work, income creation and citizen participation, through, inter alia, training programmes that result from dialogue between Governments, employers and employees of various sectors of the economy, as appropriate;

21. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure the right to education of good quality for women and girls, on an equal basis with men and boys, and that they complete a full course of primary education, and to renew their efforts to improve and expand the education of girls and women at all levels, including at the secondary and higher levels, as well as vocational education and technical training, in order to, inter alia, achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication;

22. *Urges* Member States to increase efforts to improve the quality of education and to promote universal access to education, without discrimination on any basis, to ensure that adolescents and youth can acquire the knowledge, capacities, skills and ethical values needed, including through appropriate access to scholarships and other mobility programmes;

[...]

30. *Also calls upon* Governments to strengthen national social and child protection systems, and care and support programmes for adolescents and youth, in particular for young women and adolescent girls affected by and vulnerable to HIV, as well as their families and caregivers, including through the provision of equal opportunities to support the development to full potential of orphans and other children affected by and living with HIV, especially through equal access to education, the creation of safe and non-discriminatory learning environments, supportive legal systems and protections, including civil registration systems, and provision of comprehensive information and support, including youth-friendly health centres, to children and their families and caregivers, especially age-appropriate HIV information to assist children living with HIV as they transition through adolescence, consistent with their evolving capacities;

[...]

32. *Encourages* Governments to improve information in order to enable young people to make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making, to develop and strengthen opportunities for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting their social and political participation and removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society, and to promote and support youth associations, volunteer groups and entrepreneurship;

[...]

Resolution 2013/1

New trends in migration: demographic aspects

[...]

18. *Reiterates* the need to consider how the migration of highly skilled persons, especially in the health, social and engineering sectors, affects the development efforts of developing countries and endorses the example of good practice set by the World Health Organization Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, whereby the international community is encouraged to support and promote the strengthening of health systems;

[...]