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President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund: draft resolution A/49/L.5

The President (*interpretation from French*): This morning, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting, the Assembly is commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund. In this connection, the Assembly has before it at draft resolution which has been issued as document A/49/L.5.

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to participate in the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, which concluded its deliberations barely a month ago, adopted an innovative Programme of Action and provided further proof of the Organization's devotion to and tradition of debate and open discussion of all views and perceptions of problems, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, until consensus is reached.

It is therefore only fitting that we congratulate ourselves on the positive results of that Conference. Here,

I should like to congratulate all the delegations that participated in it and that spared no effort to achieve the results attained. In this connection, President Mubarak, his Government and the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who did all in their power to make the Conference a success, deserve our heartfelt thanks and gratitude. I would also take this opportunity to pay a well-earned tribute to the United Nations Population Fund and its Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, not only for her work on the Cairo Conference but also for her constant efforts to find solutions to demographic problems throughout the world.

Established by the United Nations in 1969, UNFPA was given a mandate to make countries aware of demographic problems and possible strategies for solving them and to assist developing countries in their population programmes. Over the past 25 years, under the direction of the Economic and Social Council and its Executive Board, the Fund has carried out its mandate with resolve, and the results achieved demonstrate the success of its work. Indeed, in 1969, there was little awareness of demographic questions and their impact on economic and social development and human welfare, and few developing countries had a national programme dealing with population questions.

Thus the role of the demographic factor in the evolution of economic and social development was greatly underestimated. For the same reason it was controversial.

Today virtually all countries have begun to implement population programmes, which are backed up by very clear and functional strategies and plans of action. Furthermore, a number of countries have established within their administrations specialized units to ensure the integration of demographic variables into economic and social development plans and programmes. The Cairo Conference has just demonstrated that the demographic factor has become a key element in all debates, programmes and action in the field of development.

Today we note the increased awareness of population problems, and we can take some satisfaction in the progress that has been achieved, since the creation of UNFPA, towards stabilizing the growth in world population and improving the health of mothers and children through the implementation, in a large number of countries, of concerted and coherent programmes of family planning.

The success of the International Conference on Population and Development that was held recently in Cairo will undoubtedly help to reinforce our efforts in the quest for an integrated approach to development - an approach that makes population programmes and policies a fundamental element in the population development equation.

But these results, encouraging as they are, should not make us lose sight of the fact that the road we still have to travel is long and full of ambushes. Although, in absolute terms, the birth rate has gone down, the annual increases in world population are greater than anything seen in the past. This obviously necessitates concerted global action. Such action is essential if we are to safeguard what has been achieved over the past 25 years.

In these circumstances, the Programme of Action that was adopted in Cairo is a sound basis and a useful tool for optimizing the efforts of the international community. By adopting this Programme the international community, for the first time, went beyond demographic targets and made the individual and the family the very focus of development activities and programmes. In so doing, it recognized that investment in the individual - in his health and education - is the key to sustainable economic growth and sustainable development as a whole. This was the sense of my opening message at the International Conference on Families in October 1994.

None the less, I should like to remind people that if the adoption of the Programme of Action itself was essential, its implementation is vital. Therefore, before

concluding, I should like to call upon Governments to do everything they can to translate into action the Programme of Action that we adopted in Cairo. In this connection, our support for the activities of UNFPA should be further strengthened.

At a time when the international community has been fired by greater enthusiasm in its quest for sustainable development we should not lose sight of the fact that the question of population involves not only resources and the need to improve standards of living but also our quest for peace and security on Earth.

I now call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who wishes to address the General Assembly at this time.

The Secretary-General: In 1969, Secretary-General U Thant called for a

"global partnership, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion, and to supply the required momentum to development efforts."

Out of U Thant's concern, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was born.

Now, 25 years later, it has operations in 140 countries; more than 100 countries make contributions to its work; it operates field offices in 58 countries; and it employs a total of 837 staff members.

This milestone is a time to celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the Fund. It is a time to recognize the importance of the work of UNFPA. That work involves both formulating and implementing programmes for population planning.

The Fund's work is fundamental to the success of United Nations efforts for peace and development. It is also challenging. It demands perseverance, patience and commitment. UNFPA has shown all of those qualities. It has earned the gratitude and the respect of the international community.

I should like now to consider why the work of UNFPA is so crucial; to review some of its accomplishments; and to outline our hopes for the future, along with the challenges we must face.

The United Nations is charged with the enormous task of promoting the welfare of all humanity. We work to maintain and establish peace. And we promote development, to forestall problems. We have worked to protect the environment and to foster healthy, democratic societies.

But we cannot attain our objective of a stable and prosperous world if the goalposts are moved down the field. The infrastructure on which our solutions are based depends on the size of our population. Our work towards such important aims as human rights, sustainable development, international trade and liveable cities cannot succeed if the increase in the number of the world's inhabitants becomes unbearable.

Today, there is a real risk of such a tragedy. Global population has experienced runaway growth in recent years. From 1950 to 1990, it more than doubled in size.

Currently, the world's population exceeds 5.5 billion, and almost 80 per cent live in the least-developed regions. Our projections show that the global population could more than double again by the year 2050, with the biggest increases in the developing countries.

The international community has long understood that this trend presents a threat to stability. Thus, in 1947 - just two years after the United Nations came into being - the Population Commission was established. It was to track the growth of populations and provide other demographic information.

The UNFPA became operational in 1969 - three years after the General Assembly authorized the United Nations to provide technical assistance relating to population.

Supported through voluntary contributions, the Fund is now the largest internationally funded provider of population assistance to developing countries. Last year it approved 480 projects, for a total cost of \$72 million.

The Fund's purpose is to help set up population planning programmes around the globe, and to provide financial assistance for their implementation. But it recognizes the broad social implications of its work. The Fund engages in other activities to further the implementation of population policies. These include work on census and civil registration; research in many fields; and information, communication and education.

Particularly under the leadership of its current executive director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the UNFPA has focused on the empowerment of women. In so doing, Mrs. Sadik has made a major contribution to the cause of women's rights.

In its work the Fund has been careful to respect the sovereign right of self-determination, for this is the reflection of the individual right of choice at an international level.

Over the past 25 years, the Fund has benefited from exceptional leadership - first, by the late Mr. Rafael Salas, and, since 1987, by Mrs. Sadik. I wish to pay tribute to them and to their staff. They have provided excellent service to the United Nations.

The international community must continue to support the UNFPA. The Fund is uniquely situated to promote population policies. It brings to its work undoubted dedication, great moral weight, long practical and political experience, and presence in the field.

The UNFPA has also helped to organize a series of global population conferences. They have provided essential help to the United Nations in its efforts to encourage global policies on population. These meetings have provided a forum for the world to take stock of potential problems and to map out solutions.

At the 1974 World Population Conference, held in Bucharest, the international community adopted a World Plan of Action. It recognized the link between population and economic and social development. Ten years later the United Nations convened the International Conference on Population in Mexico City. The Declaration adopted there addressed such issues as migration, urbanization and ageing populations.

Most recently the UNFPA played a major role in organizing the International Conference on Population and Development, held this September in Cairo. Mrs. Sadik was Secretary-General of the Conference. Almost 180 countries joined with non-governmental organizations at the Conference to discuss how to balance population growth and sustainable development. And in six days the representatives of many disparate cultures succeeded in adopting a Programme of Action, which maps out a strategy for the next 20 years.

Afterwards, Mrs. Sadik said that the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo "starts from the reality of the

world we live in, and shows us the path to a better reality." Through specific goals, spanning issues from education to reproductive health to family planning, the international community charted a path that could lead the world away from environmental and social disasters.

Such conferences have promoted awareness. But it is important to remember that the international community must follow through on the commitments it has made if it is to reap the benefits of its deliberations. Only political will, backed by financial resources, can give life to them. Otherwise, plans of action soon become meaningless.

That is why the UNFPA's role will continue to be important, and to be challenging. The Fund must continue to encourage societies to develop population policies. And it must continue to respect the traditions of many diverse societies for its work to touch on the most important questions for humanity - relating to the relationships between men and women, the question of families, and posterity.

The United Nations must continue to serve as a forum where the world can debate its future. Fundamental questions will be asked here. They may arouse concern. The UNFPA must be prepared for controversy. But this is a necessary part of its task, and indeed a testament to its importance.

It is vital that in this enterprise we have the help of able and active programmes such as the UNFPA. I thank the Fund for 25 years of support. I look forward to our cooperation over the next 25 years to come.

The President: (*interpretation from French*): At the request of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund and following consultations with regional groups, I would now authorize, as an exceptional measure, the Chairman of the Group of 77 to speak on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I understand that the Chairman of the Group of 77 can speak in that capacity only by way of an exception. It is therefore an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly on behalf of the delegations that are members of the Group of 77 and on behalf of the delegation of China, during the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The sustained efforts the UNFPA has continued to make to raise the consciousness of the world about the

importance of population questions and their strict relationship with economic and social development, as well as about the assistance the UNFPA provides to more than 141 developing countries in this field, giving it pride of place today among the most visible institutions of the United Nations system.

It will be recalled that starting as part of a modest trust fund which was placed under the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1967 and then in 1969 was attached to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a token seed capital of only \$3 million, UNFPA today can derive legitimate pride from what has been achieved over the past 25 years, under the leadership of its first Executive Director, Mr. Rafael Salas, to whom here we wish to pay a well-deserved posthumous tribute, and also thanks to the fresh life breathed into it by its current Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik.

The mandate of the Fund as established by the Economic and Social Council in 1973 and reaffirmed by that same body in 1986, has not lost any of its relevance today despite the amount of time that has passed. On the contrary, the mandate has become more pertinent and relevant than ever before. Thus as the years have passed the evolution of population policies, particularly demographic aspects and their impact on daily socio-economic activities in every nation, has conferred on UNFPA an irreplaceable role.

The wealth of experience acquired by the Fund in the fields of family planning and family services, and mother and child health, as well as its proven capacity to provide and coordinate assistance and its flexibility to respond to the needs of developing countries, bear witness to the maturity of UNFPA and consolidate its reputation with the beneficiary countries, of which it has become a privileged partner.

Any anniversary is a propitious opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved so far and start to think about what needs to be done to build for a sound future. In this connection I wish to emphasize the very significant contribution made by the Fund to strengthening the efforts of our countries by its presence at their side and helping with everything they have done to cope with population problems. The Group of 77 and China welcome the efforts made by the Fund that have greatly assisted in reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, particularly in the developing world, as well as its efforts towards promoting the almost universal use of

family planning programmes and improving life expectancy rates.

The success of the work of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September this year, and the preparatory process relating to that Conference, is also a credit to UNFPA, the backbone of the organization of that world meeting. That achievement alone would place this action of the Fund among the most signal efforts made by the United Nations to articulate international cooperation for development.

For the future, the ambitious Programme of Action adopted by the Cairo Conference, the qualitative and quantitative targets of which cover the next 20 years, should be the new focus of interest of UNFPA. In view of the immensity of the particular mission which has been allocated to it, it seems to us essential to consider the organizational and institutional arrangements that would be most conducive to having this body properly perform its task. The present session of the General Assembly provides us with an excellent occasion to initiate this exercise.

Among the factors which have helped to strengthen the credibility of the Fund and which at the same time have contributed to improving its performance, we must refer to the respect for certain key principles that have guided its action throughout its existence, particularly the following cardinal principles to which the developing countries are particularly wedded: unconditional support for the beneficiary countries; due respect for the specific situation prevailing in each country; respect for the sovereign right of States to draw up, formulate and implement population policies and programmes in the light of their own needs; and, a flexible response to the specific needs of the developing countries.

Being mindful of these parameters is more than ever the best possible guarantee for fruitful cooperation between the Fund and all the beneficiary countries in the developing world.

In conclusion, may I on behalf of the Group of 77 and China take this opportunity to place on record our gratitude to Mrs. Nafis Sadik for her personal efforts and the talented way in which she has been directing this institution. Our congratulations are extended equally to all the members of her dynamic team, who through their labours have been able to make sure that UNFPA is equal to the challenges of the complex population problems. It will be understood

therefore that the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77, and of China, are particularly happy, through Algeria's signature, to sponsor the draft resolution celebrating this important event.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of the Gambia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): The Gambia as Chairman of the African Group for this month is greatly honoured to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group on the occasion of the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Since this is the first time my delegation has addressed the Assembly in its capacity as Chairman of the African Group - apart from our short intervention yesterday - it is quite fitting that I should convey to you, Sir, the African Group's deep gratification and sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Since you are a distinguished son of Africa dedicated to the service of common humanity, we are convinced you will bring to your high office the wealth of knowledge and rich experience that has characterized your selfless service to your country and Africa. Already, your laudable efforts to guide and enrich the proceedings of the forty-ninth session are beginning to be felt in all aspects of our work. Indeed, it is a clear indication of the immense success that will eventually crown the work of this session. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to assure you, Sir, of our fullest support and readiness to work with you throughout to achieve a successful session.

The commemoration of 25 years of UNFPA's activities, exemplified throughout by dedicated and meritorious service to our communities, deserves our commendation and international recognition. It therefore behooves us on this happy occasion to extend our congratulations and best wishes to UNFPA, its indefatigable Executive Director and efficient staff, and its dedicated partners. The African Group feels it is appropriate to support fully the congratulatory draft resolution before the General Assembly and hopes that it will be adopted by consensus.

The celebration of this silver anniversary is taking place at a historic period in the annals of world population activities, particularly the just-concluded International Conference on Population and Development

held in Cairo. The Conference not only generated wide international interest but also drew into sharp focus population issues and their impact on development. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference will serve as a guidepost for bringing together the interrelated issues of population, sustained economic growth and development, and the environment, all of which are of great concern to the international community.

Globally, UNFPA has, true to its mandate, developed the international community's capacity to respond to population issues; raised awareness of the social, economic and environmental implications of national and international problems associated with population growth; and provided assistance and coordination in population planning, programming and implementation.

In this context, Africa, like other regions, has been a direct and important beneficiary of UNFPA's population programmes relating to the efforts to moderate rapid population growth, uneven population distribution, and high maternal and infant mortality, and to improve the reproductive health and behaviour of the relevant sectors of the population.

It is worthy of note that Africa's economic development has, in general, not kept pace with its population growth rate. The effects of this imbalance are felt in the areas of health care, housing, schooling, employment, and food security, among other pressing needs. Thus, the crucial role of UNFPA in helping to alleviate the inadequacies created by rapid population growth in Africa has continued to grow in scope and importance.

We in Africa are mindful of the fact that efforts to enhance economic performance, provide social services and maintain social order and political stability continue to be eroded, with painful consequences in some cases, by population pressures. It is for this reason that our concerns for population issues have been reflected in many regional declarations, international instruments, documents and action programmes, including, to list just a few, the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community; the Dakar-Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development; and the Tunis Declaration and Resolution on Population and Development by the General Assembly of Heads of State and Government. In fact, the purpose of the African Population Commission, established in 1993, is to bring maximum political attention to and action on population on the part of the States members of the Organization of African Unity. At Cairo, Africa joined

the other regions of the world in focusing on the problems of population and development and arriving at a consensus for international action. Indeed, the world saw the willingness and the commitment of Governments and grass-roots organizations to come together to play a crucial and catalytic role in moving the cause of social development forward into the next century.

Africa is a priority region for population assistance, as is attested to by the depth and breadth of population programmes being assisted by UNFPA. Such assistance at the country level should continue, and should be further intensified in the aftermath of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The relationship between population and social and economic development and the need to formulate and implement a national population policy to address the issues involved are being given more urgency and importance.

Together with UNFPA, and in light of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference, African Governments are looking forward to international collaboration to develop and implement that Programme of Action. In doing so, we must concentrate on the following strategic goals: intensification of information on population, education and communication programmes in both the formal and the non-formal sectors in order to encourage attitudinal change, especially among rural and urban adolescents; integration of population factors into development plans and activities; and increased support to reproductive health and family planning in order to cater to the health and social needs of the most vulnerable groups - that is, mothers and children. We should also provide support to help improve the social, economic, health and political status of women.

In recognition of the challenges ahead, UNFPA has been forging partnerships with African regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity for increased political support and the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank for an increased resource base for population activities. UNFPA has also actively sought to identify viable non-governmental organizations that can participate in population and development activities at the country level. In order to bring technical assistance nearer and faster to African countries, UNFPA has also set up three country support teams in sub-Saharan Africa, located in Dakar, Addis Ababa and Harare, respectively. More resources would be required to meet the challenge of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. I therefore call on all African

Governments to continue their support for the population cause and to UNFPA.

In concluding, I should like once more to express the African Group's congratulations to UNFPA on its achievements during the past 25 years and to express our support for its programmes in the years ahead. We take cognizance of the conviction and the resourcefulness of UNFPA's leadership, as personified by its able Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, who worked tirelessly and courageously, together with a highly qualified and motivated staff, to make the Cairo Conference a reality and a success. This commemoration of UNFPA's 25 years of operations and notable achievements is indeed timely and memorable.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Samoa, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): I have the honour to speak in my capacity as Chairman of the Asian Group to express on behalf of the Group our warmest congratulations and appreciation to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its staff on this memorable occasion, the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its operations. The Asian Group fully supports the congratulatory draft resolution before the General Assembly.

The Asia Pacific region contains six of the 10 most populous countries in the world. Stretching over nine time zones from Azerbaijan in the west to my own country, Samoa, in the east, this region can be proud of many achievements, from the green revolution to industrial development. Its current population of over 3 billion is both a triumph and a challenge. Better medical techniques and improved health and nutrition have led to dramatic reductions in infant mortality rates and to longer life expectancy.

Since becoming fully operational in 1969, the UNFPA has accumulated a quarter century of experience in formulating and implementing population policies and programmes. As the world's largest multilateral population agency, the Fund is in a unique position to assess opportunities and identify solutions for the smooth and effective functioning of population programmes.

Over the years, in collaboration with and at the request of Governments in developing countries, including many in the Asian region, UNFPA-funded programmes have made

advances in increasing awareness of and appreciation for population dynamics and their global implications. UNFPA has always recognized that population activities are multisectoral, with core activities such as family planning and data collection and analysis, as well as the formation of population policy, educational programmes, the provision of vital information and communication. The improvement of women's health and education, and concern for the environment are also key core activities. Regional assistance has been provided in cooperation and collaboration with the relevant subregional organizations: the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Pacific Commission, the South Pacific Forum, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

The overall assistance provided by UNFPA to the Asia region since 1969 amounts to some \$869 million. In my own country, I am pleased to note that the cooperation between UNFPA and Samoa started in 1971 with the assistance to the family welfare programme in strengthening service delivery; the provision of information, education and communication; the introduction of population education into the school system; a contribution to the successful completion of the 1991 census and in the population and environment project which is now being implemented by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

The determination of the international community to resolve population issues has reached new heights. Since the 1974 World Population Conference, the International Conference on Population in 1984, the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-First Century in 1989 and this year's International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, a quantum leap has truly been achieved. There has been a shift from the previous emphasis on demography and population control to population and sustainable development. There is also a recognition now of the need for comprehensive reproductive health care and reproductive rights; growing collaboration between governmental and non-governmental agencies; renewed emphasis on people's participation at the community level; improving the status of women in every aspect of development; a recognition of the needs of adolescents; and, perhaps above all, stronger political commitment.

Rapid population growth and unbalanced distribution pose serious challenges to sustainable development and prosperity in the coming decades. At the national level, developing countries struggle to keep pace with the needs

of their people. Governments face critical pressures in trying to feed, house and educate their population while at the same trying to provide adequate services to rural and growing urban areas. At the individual level, reproductive health and family planning are essential needs. The region's challenges include achieving a better balance between population growth and its resource base; providing jobs in growing urban areas; increasing awareness of and overcoming obstacles in environmental protection; and improving the status of women.

But greater challenges lie ahead, and we in the Asian Group are confident that UNFPA, with the assistance of the international community, will continue to provide dynamic leadership as it has done in the past to implement the Programme of Action adopted recently at the Cairo Conference. The successful outcome of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development surely attests to the skilful manner and active role played by UNFPA and the Conference secretariat in guiding and promoting the new global population agenda in the context of sustainable development. The objective now for the Fund and indeed for the international community is fully to implement the Programme of Action agreed to in Cairo.

Let me conclude by offering our congratulations on behalf of the Asian Group to the Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, for her devoted and outstanding leadership, for her vision in steering the Organization in the right direction to where it is today, and indeed for the example she and her predecessor in office have set for the entire United Nations system. We wish Mrs. Sadik and UNFPA well in their efforts for the tasks ahead.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of the Czech Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): It is an honour and privilege for me, as Chairman of the Eastern European Group of States this month, sincerely to congratulate the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on its twenty-fifth anniversary and to express our sincere appreciation for all the achievements it has attained in defining and resolving problems related to population and development issues and to the improvement of quality of life.

It turns out that, at this moment, not very many of UNFPA's programmes are operating in countries of the region I am representing here today, and one might well ask whether this indicates that the region is not facing any problems. The answer is, obviously, that this is hardly the

case. More likely, one could argue that previous regimes of the region of Eastern Europe had little interest in outsiders examining terribly closely their population policies and practices - policies and practices that were often very damaging to the well-being of women, the welfare of children and the health of the family.

I should just like to mention a couple of extreme examples that come to mind. On the one hand, in several parts of the Eastern European region, abortion has been used in essence as a form of contraception, on demand and with hardly any limitations. On the other hand, there were other parts of the Eastern European region in which population growth was promoted at any cost, whatever the effect on the resulting thousands of unwanted babies. Consequently, as I said, hardly can it be said that the region has been spared any problems.

For the Eastern European region, the important perspective is not only the linkage between population policies and economic development, but also - and perhaps even more so - the linkage between population policies and the devastated ecology of many areas in our region. On this occasion, therefore, we look forward to an even closer cooperation of our countries with the UNFPA so that we can garner the full benefits of the experience UNFPA has accumulated over the past quarter century.

Meanwhile, however, we find it absolutely proper and correct that the UNFPA should be focusing in particular on the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged parts of the world. This is indeed as it should be. UNFPA's most recent achievement, of course, was the Cairo Conference. In our opinion, the controversies that were part and parcel of that Conference are a healthy sign that the Conference was grappling with live issues that concern every country - indeed, every family. In our view, the Plan of Action adopted in Cairo should be considered as a minimum programme to be implemented, especially as it concerns the advancement of women, the quality and extent of health care and family care of children, and the quality of education.

My delegation and the countries of the region I am representing here today appreciate tremendously the work of UNFPA's Executive Director, Mrs. Sadik. Let me mention that we find it not terribly common for women to be heading important international institutions, even within the United Nations family, and we certainly hope that she will not be for very long one of the very few women in high positions. Her leadership no doubt

contributes to the effectiveness of the UNFPA, and, on behalf of my regional group, I should like to extend my congratulations to her and to all her colleagues - and happy birthday, UNFPA.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Paraguay, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Fernandez Estigarribia (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This month Paraguay has the great honour of presiding over the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and, in that capacity, I should like to convey our congratulations and our appreciation to the United Nations Population Fund on the occasion of the commemoration of its 25 years of operation. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States considers appropriate and supports the commemorative draft resolution introduced before the General Assembly.

Ever since its inception, the Population Fund has provided, at the request of their Governments, assistance to the countries of our region in a broad range of priority programmes and in strengthening their national capacity in population matters. Areas that received support from programmes at both the State and regional levels include: data collection and analysis, including census operations; surveys on fertility, mortality and migration; the extension of health services to mothers and children, including family planning; education on population issues; and research and training in population matters and development.

Almost \$380 million of its regular funds have been made available to the region through the Fund ever since the start-up of its operations, and around \$23 million in additional funds has been mobilized, on a multilateral and bilateral basis, over the same period.

The Fund has always recognized the multisectoral nature of population assistance, and thus it has been able to meet the needs of the countries of our region despite their very different population situations and problems.

This policy must be pursued and expanded. That kind of support - attuned to the diversity in cultures and differing perceptions as well as to the role of moral and religious values - must be at the heart of all the Fund does.

We consider important the establishment of the new system of technical assistance to countries, which is based in Santiago de Chile and involves a support team that

includes 12 advisers. That system has made it possible to increase the capacity of the Fund and the speed with which it will be able to respond to and meet the technical assistance needs of the countries of our region. The system also makes it a priority to identify and make use of the technical resources available at the national level.

Over the 25 years of its existence the Fund has been able to build up vast experience in the formulation and execution of programmes and projects. These programmes have contributed to advancing knowledge of the workings of demographics, its determining factors and its implications.

On this occasion we must also refer to the International Conference on Population and Development, which took place in Cairo last month. The Programme of Action it adopted represents a milestone in furthering the understanding of population matters, as it emphasizes individual rights and decisions and, in particular, the imperative need to give special priority to supporting the integral development of women and to their full participation in the benefits of development.

The last few decades have, in Latin America and the Caribbean, seen a marked drop in the rates of fertility, demographic growth and mortality, particularly in infant mortality. These strides notwithstanding, serious problems remain in the region that affect in particular the poorest segments of the population: the fertility rate of adolescents has not shown the same degree of change as that of other age groups, and maternal mortality continues at unacceptably high levels.

Access on the part of the poor to information and quality services in terms of reproductive health and family planning is limited, and a great deal remains to be learned about interrelationships between population, sustainable development and the environment so that appropriate programmes and policies can be designed. Policies aimed at decentralizing public spending and social services require an increased capacity for analysis and greater operational capability at the local and municipal levels.

The region identified many of the critical problems besetting its countries during the preparation process for the Cairo Conference, and in May 1993 it adopted the Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development as the outcome of the Regional Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Population and Development, held in Mexico City. The preparation of national reports on population led to a careful analysis of

each national situation and in most of the countries grew out of a broad nationwide consultation process that included Governments, non-governmental organizations and various other groups of civil society. By the same token, this spirit of participation and inclusion was manifest in the make-up of the national delegations to the Cairo Conference.

As our region hails the Population Fund on its twenty-fifth anniversary, it expresses the hope that the Fund will go on supporting the rewarding process of gaining insight, through the broadest possible national participation, into ways of solving the population problems of the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I should like to convey our congratulations to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, on her vision in the population arena, which has made it possible to place women and their needs in the forefront of population-related activities.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the representative of Canada, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mrs. Fréchette (Canada): On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I am happy to join previous speakers in congratulating the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Over the last 25 years we have all come to know much more about the dynamics of population and its importance to development. Much of what we have learned is thanks to the efforts of UNFPA. The recently concluded International Conference on Population and Development built on UNFPA's experiences, its country programmes and its knowledge of what actually works at the grass-roots level in adopting a Programme of Action that reflects the interrelationships between population and many development goals.

The mandate of UNFPA, as originally defined and later reaffirmed in 1986, calls on the Fund to assume a leading role in promoting population programmes, building awareness of population issues and developing the capacity of countries to respond to their particular needs in population and family planning. We applaud the considerable success that UNFPA has enjoyed during its 25-year operation in pursuing these objectives. It has been particularly effective in establishing the population field as

a critical development issue. This has been clearly demonstrated by the extremely rapid growth of global interest in and demand for population programmes.

UNFPA programmes encourage activities aimed at improving the quality of family planning services and enhancing their social acceptability and effectiveness. Using such methods as country support teams, the Fund formulates population education activities and helps design projects for the special needs of women, adolescents and indigenous communities. By helping to improve women's health, education and economic opportunities, the Fund has contributed to important development goals, as well as having had an effect on population growth.

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge with appreciation the dedication of the UNFPA staff and their most valuable contribution to the work and success of the Fund. I would also like to pay a special tribute to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, who has provided and continues to provide such dynamic and effective direction to UNFPA. We are particularly pleased to note that under her leadership UNFPA's focus on women has extended to her own staff, where 44 per cent of professional positions are held by women. This is one of the highest percentages among United Nations agencies and organizations, and speaks well of UNFPA's capacity to practise what it preaches.

On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I again congratulate UNFPA on its twenty-fifth anniversary, and express our deepest gratitude to its dedicated staff and volunteers.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the representative of the United States, the host country.

Ms. Oakley (United States of America): My delegation, as the delegation of the host country, is pleased to be here today on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Since its creation UNFPA has been the world's leading multilateral force in the family planning and reproductive health field. It has exercised this leadership role with great skill and significant success.

Most important to UNFPA's success over the last 25 years has been its strong and dynamic management. From the early years, under the leadership of Rafael Salas, to the present, under the courageous and sure hand

of Mrs. Nafis Sadik, UNFPA has grown stronger, more capable and increasingly effective.

Over these 25 years tremendous changes have occurred in both the scope and the prevalence of national and international policies dealing with population and reproductive health. A quarter of a century ago few countries even recognized the importance of population issues within the development process. Today few countries question the critical relationship between population and sustainable development.

In addition to this dramatic change in prevalence, we all recognize the significant change in scope these policies have undergone. Nowhere was this change more evident than during preparations for the very successful International Conference on Population and Development. Population issues are now recognized as having a much broader influence on development overall and as being much more broadly influenced by other societal factors.

A significant achievement of UNFPA has been its role in establishing national population coordination units. These units have increased both the visibility of population issues and the implementation of national programmes to address them. UNFPA has also been key to the inclusion of population issues within many nations' development planning processes. Incorporation of population as a key variable within the complex development equation is critical to efforts to maintain the attention of policy makers.

We also recognize and applaud the impact UNFPA has had over the last 25 years in the world-wide expansion of services and information. UNFPA has contributed greatly to the significant expansion in world-wide access to maternal and child health and family planning services, as well as the vast increases in information, education and communication. More recently UNFPA has promoted an increased understanding of the critical role women play in advancing and addressing population issues as well as their key role in national development.

The culmination of many of these activities was, of course, the recent International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo. The tremendous success of this historic conference is testimony to the years of preparation and hard work that went into this undertaking. At the Conference an unprecedented number of nations reached consensus on a visionary Programme of Action to address the issues associated with rapid population growth, quality of life and sustainable development. The Programme of Action recognizes the interrelationships

between population and development and calls for a new comprehensive approach to address population and related development issues. It acknowledges that both rapid population growth and wasteful consumption patterns play major roles in environmental degradation.

The Programme of Action provides concrete estimates of financial resource requirements for implementing the new comprehensive approach. Although these resource requirements are substantial, they are both attainable and worthy of our support. The return on the world's investment in these programmes will be a better life for all its people.

One of the most important outcomes of the Conference is that it has focused the world's attention on the urgency of addressing population issues. We have the knowledge, skill and technology needed to address these issues. The Cairo Conference demonstrated that we also have the political will. Success is within our grasp. Now is the time to act.

Yet, while the Cairo Programme of Action reflects consensus among nations and will be implemented according to nations' own laws and traditions, the document also acknowledges the deeply personal nature of reproductive decisions. These decisions profoundly affect the lives of individual people, particularly women. A central theme of the new comprehensive approach is the critical role that women must play in reproductive decision-making and the development of nations. The education, empowerment and equality of women are key components of improving the lives of people in all nations.

The right to choose the number and spacing of one's children freely and responsibly has been recognized internationally for more than 20 years and was reaffirmed at Cairo. The Programme of Action emphasizes the importance of ensuring that quality, voluntary family planning and reproductive health information and services are universally available so that all the world's people can exercise this right.

The accomplishments of these years have been remarkable, but we must focus our sights on the challenges for the future. Here again, we are looking to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for leadership.

Implementation of the comprehensive approach will require better coordination among United Nations

agencies. UNFPA will lead in the effort to develop a coordinated action plan for follow-up clearly outlining each agency's role and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

We also wish to underscore the importance of an assessment by UNFPA and all donors as to how approaches to population assistance should be modified to take into account the comprehensive plan. We have been pleased to learn that this review is already under way at UNFPA.

A critical new area that I believe UNFPA must address is the reproductive health needs of refugee women. Developing new partnerships with old friends - like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - to integrate reproductive health services into emergency health care is imperative and UNFPA's leadership in this will be essential.

Of course, successful action in this regard and on the Cairo recommendations as a whole will be possible only if there is a substantial increase in available funding from all sources, including multilateral and bilateral donors, recipient countries and the private sector. UNFPA must lead an international effort to translate political consensus into the resources needed to move forward with the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

My delegation wholeheartedly supports efforts to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action. We are examining population issues within the United States to ensure that our own programmes are consistent with the international consensus. Perhaps more important, as a world leader in funding for population and reproductive health programmes, we are working hard to increase our own financial commitments in this area. We hope other nations will join us in providing the necessary resources to implement this challenging agenda. We also look forward to working in partnership with other nations and multilateral organizations in undertaking these critical programmes.

In conclusion, let me say that the United States is delighted to be back among the nations that can be counted on as strong supporters of UNFPA. Our commitment reflects both the importance of its work and the high esteem in which we hold the Organization. We hope to be able to continue to increase our financial support in the future as we have in recent years. The past 25 years of have been a wonderful beginning. We look forward to the next 25 years of continuing to build on this strong foundation.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Germany, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Graf zu Rantzau (Germany): It is an honour for me to address the Assembly today on behalf of the European Union and Austria on the very special occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

An institution which started its operations a quarter of a century ago has matured. It began with a simple trust fund. In 1972 the General Assembly changed the character of UNFPA into a fund established under the authority of the General Assembly and placed it under the governing body of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), by duly taking into account the separate identity of UNFPA. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council played a major role in defining the aims and the purposes of the Fund, including the establishment of general principles to be applied for the allocation of resources. In 1987 the name was changed to United Nations Population Fund. This all has proved to be a very solid basis. UNFPA has developed over the time into one of the most important players in the field of multilateral population and development assistance. Its neutrality and responsiveness to the specific needs of individual developing countries represents a unique comparative advantage.

The Fund's first Executive Director, Rafael Salas, laid the basis for UNFPA and influenced to a very high degree its the scope and development for 18 years, until his death in 1987. He is to be praised and remembered as the spiritual founding father. The fact that this Fund has for many years now been the fastest growing institution in the United Nations system is eloquent testimony to his important contribution.

An institution depends on motivated and committed staff at all levels. The staff of UNFPA have consistently performed exceptionally over the last 25 years, often in difficult circumstances. We would like to congratulate all of them today and to wish them well in their future work. An institution depends on outstanding leadership. Since Mrs. Sadik became Executive Director of UNFPA in 1987, she has provided inspiration not only for the Fund but also for the United Nations and the international community as a whole. I trust that today is a happy day for Mrs. Sadik. She is the first woman in the United Nations system to head a major fund or programme. She

and UNFPA have broken the ground. Today, four United Nations organizations are headed by professional women.

Since 1969 UNFPA has provided close to \$3 billion in population assistance to virtually every developing country. As the Assembly knows, the States members of the European Union together with other European countries provided two-thirds of the voluntary contributions in 1993. We will continue to provide strong support to UNFPA and its activities in the future.

UNFPA played a significant role in ensuring the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Conference resulted in a Programme of Action which contains a global approach to population and development. Many of the ideas contained in this document have already been put into practice in the field by UNFPA. Through its advocacy role UNFPA has done a great job worldwide by focusing the population debate on girls and their education, on gender equity by empowering women in development, on broadening individual choice through the use of family planning. Let me assure the Assembly that the European Union will do all it can to fulfil the commitments made in Cairo.

In conclusion, it has always been a privilege and a pleasure to work closely with our friends and colleagues in UNFPA. We wish them well on this special day and look forward to continuing close cooperation with them in the future. We trust that the draft resolution commemorating this anniversary will be adopted by acclamation.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of India, President of the Executive Board of UNFPA.

Mr. Ansari (India): It is a pleasure and an honour for my country to participate in today's commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). As President of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNFPA Executive Board for the year 1994, I have had the advantage of observing at first hand the dedicated work of the UNFPA under its Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik. As the dynamic and committed leader of a highly efficient organization, she has made the Fund an effective and trusted development partner.

It will be recalled that in 1973 the Economic and Social Council proclaimed the UNFPA's aims and purposes, and they remain valid today: to build up knowledge and capacity, to promote awareness, to extend

systematic and sustained economic assistance, and to play a leading role in the United Nations in promoting population programmes. The success of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo last month is proof of the competence with which the UNFPA has fulfilled this mandate.

While most of the credit for this goes to the countries themselves, the UNFPA has certainly been an important catalyst in this process, especially in the areas of creation of awareness, policy and programme formulation, data collection and analysis, and capacity-building. The UNFPA is the largest internationally funded source of population assistance. By mid-1994 it had provided a total of nearly \$3 billion to more than 141 countries globally.

The role of the UNFPA has, for me, an understandably special significance, as its long-standing cooperation with my own country, India, in the area of family planning and training of staff, dates back to 1974. The current UNFPA programme is the fourth in my country and the Fund's largest. It gives me particular pleasure, therefore, to join this commemorative process today.

The Cairo Programme of Action of September 1994 crystallizes several decades of national and international experience in the field of population and development. In the words of Mrs. Sadik, the Programme of Action, "shows us the path to a better reality." That path, clearly, must pass through the United Nations. It must build upon the blueprints of action crafted by the world's community of nations at the Earth Summit in Rio and the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. It must be refined and elaborated at the social Summit in Copenhagen, the women's Conference in Beijing and Habitat II in Istanbul, and it must be further strengthened and focused through the United Nations Agenda for Development. UNFPA has a major role to play in that process, in close collaboration with its development partners within the United Nations development system and in keeping with the principles of multilateralism.

The past two years have witnessed remarkable changes in the United Nations. We have adopted resolutions to greatly strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations development system and to revitalize and restructure the United Nations in economic, social and related fields. In doing so we have sought to give greater coherence to the international development

system and to improve the quality and impact of the development activities of the United Nations. A notable result of that revitalization and restructuring has been the establishment of the new Executive Board of the United Nations funds and programmes, including the UNDP and the UNFPA, of which I have had the honour of serving as President this year. That, and other experience, has convinced me that the United Nations system can and must play a lead role in helping build that path to a better reality. Twenty-five years of competent functioning by the United Nations Population Fund clearly emphasizes the need for the Fund to play an integral role in this cooperative process.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Nordic countries.

Mr. Birn Lian (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

I would like to express our pleasure at taking part in the celebration today of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Our warm congratulations go to the dedicated and able staff that makes UNFPA what it is today, both at the country level and here in New York. We especially want to pay tribute to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, from whose leadership the Fund has so greatly benefited. I should add that we are particularly satisfied at the way in which the International Conference on Population and Development was prepared and conducted, at the efforts of that Conference's secretariat, and at the contributions of the dynamic Secretary-General of the Conference, Mrs. Nafis Sadik.

The UNFPA has made major contributions in building awareness, supporting Governments in the adoption of forward-looking policies and programmes, funding worthwhile research and operations efforts and coordinating country-level efforts among donors, recipients, and executing agencies. One very clear indication of the respect the Fund commands is the increase in voluntary contributions over the years.

Since 1968 the increasing diversity of country needs has put growing demands on the organization. The Fund has succeeded in responding to these needs with a variety of policy and operational approaches. Evaluations that have been made tell us that recipient Governments have a positive attitude towards UNFPA's overall contributions and that they perceive UNFPA as a capable and reliable partner. Flexibility and adaptability in relation to individual

countries' situations have become a trademark of the Fund's operations.

The impact of the activities of the Fund has been felt in several areas, of which I would like on this occasion to mention three. First, through information and dialogue, the UNFPA has successfully promoted the importance of population as a critical issue in development. Fresh in everybody's minds is UNFPA's excellent contribution to and leadership in the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. Secondly, the Fund has, in cooperation with national Governments, played an active role in launching and strengthening public-sector population and family-planning programmes, complemented by important efforts from the non-governmental organization community. Thirdly, UNFPA has played an important role in building institutional capacity in many countries.

However, since no organization is ever perfect, there is necessarily room for improvement in a number of areas. There is, for instance, a need to improve the quality of programmes and projects, capacity-building and programme sustainability. The strengths and weaknesses highlighted in the independent evaluation report funded by Finland, Canada and Germany, provide an important input to the current debate on UNFPA's future orientation and activities.

An important guide for UNFPA's future activities is the lessons learned during its 25 years of operation. One such lesson, which UNFPA has already taken steps to address, is the need to reorient traditional family planning policies towards more integrated reproductive health care policies. In this respect the International Conference on Population and Development represents an important and historic breakthrough.

A second key lesson is that population and development programmes are most effective when steps simultaneously have been taken to improve the status of women. On behalf of the Nordic countries, I would like to extend our appreciation for the role played by UNFPA in its efforts to improve the quality of life of the world's women. UNFPA has helped to raise awareness about the role of women and that women must be at the centre of the reproductive health care process; women must therefore be fully involved in the decision-making process, both within society and within the family.

These and other telling lessons constitute important parts of the Programme of Action adopted by the Cairo

Conference. That Programme, formulated in a spirit of consensus and international cooperation, provides a solid platform for meeting the challenges ahead.

The Nordic countries have traditionally given high priority to the work of the Fund, and together we constitute a group of major donors to UNFPA. Combined, the Nordic allocations to the Fund amount to about 30 percent of total pledges in 1993. That testifies to our support for the activities of the Fund.

Let me conclude with a reminder that the challenges posed by the Cairo Conference, both to the United Nations system and to its member nations, are enormous and will continue to be so for many years to come. The Nordic countries are therefore looking forward to working in close partnership with UNFPA under the skilful and inspiring leadership of Mrs. Sadik in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Nordic countries will do their best to ensure that agreed commitments are implemented in the best possible manner in order to bring about development for all.

I reiterate our congratulations and wish Mrs. Sadik and her team every success in their important work.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Sher Afgan Khan of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Second Committee.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan) Chairman of the Second Committee: It is a pleasure and an honour for me, as Chairman of the Second Committee, to participate in today's commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

As the assembly is aware, the Second Committee has had a long association with the UNFPA. It has provided guidance to the Fund throughout its 25 years of operations and has watched with considerable admiration as the Fund evolved from a small trust fund into the dynamic organization that it is today.

When UNFPA began operations one score and five years ago, it had a tiny staff and less than \$3 million in voluntary contributions to work with. Two years later, this had grown to \$24 million and by the end of the third year, to \$40 million. Its subsequent growth has been equally impressive, reaching \$129 million by the beginning of the

second decade of its existence and passing the \$216 million mark 10 years later.

The Fund's journey - perhaps appropriately enough, given the size and rate of growth of the continent's population - began in Asia. And it is in Asia where UNFPA has arguably had its greatest impact and realized its greatest success. Indeed, many Asian countries now have fourth- or fifth-generation population policies and programmes, and quite a few are sharing their experiences with other developing countries through South-South cooperation arrangements.

That journey, however, has not always been a smooth one. As evidenced at last month's International Conference on Population and Development, population issues can be extremely sensitive, especially in the light of different social, cultural, religious and legal settings. The Economic and Social Council has thus made the promotion of awareness, in both developed and developing countries, one of the Fund's main aims and purposes. It is also why the multinational approach of UNFPA - being neutral and universal - has been so effective in building up knowledge and understanding of population issues and in promoting the formulation of population policies and programmes among a diverse group of countries the world over.

The consistent growth of UNFPA is a reflection of how rapidly the international community recognized the importance of population issues as an integral component of development and the indispensability of the Fund's work in addressing those issues.

The timing of today's commemoration could not be more auspicious. A little more than a month ago, at the International Conference on Population and Development, some 170 countries adopted the historic Cairo Programme of Action. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, was a distinguished participant in the Cairo Conference. Through her outstanding declaration in terms of moral, ethical and political principles, as well as commitments to action, she made a major contribution to the success of that Conference. That Programme of Action has the potential to change the world for the better. It places women and men and their families at the top of the international development agenda. It puts people first and brings women into the mainstream of development. It protects women's health, promotes their education, calls for their empowerment and encourages and rewards their economic contribution.

The Programme of Action, of course, was crafted by the countries of the world, but the acceptance and endorsement of many of these issues owe much to the operations of UNFPA over the past 25 years. These operations have taken UNFPA into practically every developing country in the world, where it has distinguished itself as a reliable and effective development partner, a valuable source of technical assistance and a trusted friend.

Pakistan looks forward to an in-depth discussion of the agenda item on the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in the very near future in both the General Assembly and the Second Committee. As Chairman of the Second Committee, Pakistan is eager to work with all the delegations on the implications of the historic and outstanding International Conference on Population and Development.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) holds special significance for my country, Pakistan. Our long association with the Fund dates back to 1970, when we signed our first country agreement with UNFPA for support for our national family-planning programme. Indeed, my country is proud to have been one of the Fund's first cooperating partners. UNFPA's work in Pakistan is also a reflection of the relevance of its activities to the development efforts of countries.

Pakistan is now into its fifth UNFPA country programme. The Fund supports our efforts to expand dramatically the coverage of family-planning services among couples of reproductive age, especially in rural areas; to integrate family-planning services into all health outlets; and to recruit and train thousands of family-planning field workers to provide door-to-door family-planning services to the rural population. The fifth programme is also providing assistance to help the Government in its efforts to improve the status of women.

The nearly 25 years of cooperation between UNFPA and Pakistan are testimony to the manifold advantages of multilateral assistance and, more specifically, to the lead role UNFPA plays within the United Nations system in providing such assistance in the field of population. It also ably exemplifies the hallmarks of multilateral assistance, namely, respect for national sovereignty, universality, unconditionality and flexibility. It shows as well that multilateral assistance can be effectively tailored to the policies and priorities of a country's development strategy. Thus, when we commemorate 25 years of UNFPA operations, we are also in essence celebrating the principles and practices of multilateralism.

The international community reconfirmed the importance of population issues in Cairo last month and defined such issues within the much broader context of sustainable human development. We therefore strongly feel that by adopting a congratulatory draft resolution commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNFPA's operations we will be reaffirming not only our commitment to multilateralism but also our confidence that UNFPA remains the lead agency within the United Nations system to address population issues.

The people and Government of Pakistan deeply appreciate the role of the UNFPA. We hold its Executive Director, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, in very high esteem and admire her for her clear vision, professional excellence and dynamic leadership of the Fund. Our deep appreciation is also due to UNFPA's dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment to making the world a better place in which to live.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the representative of Japan, who will introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.5.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): It is my great honour and privilege to be allowed to introduce the draft resolution commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on behalf of its many sponsors. In addition to those whose names appear on the draft resolution, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Australia, Belize, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominica, Fiji, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Vanuatu.

The UNFPA has come a long way in its efforts to address the population issue, which is of such vital importance to the entire international community. Starting out as a small Fund, it has grown as support for the invaluable contribution it is making in this field has increased, and its activities have expanded dramatically, both in scale and in range. Today, the UNFPA is responsible for about one third of all population assistance to developing countries, assistance that has made it possible for many of those countries to successfully formulate and implement their programmes.

The adoption of the Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo was a milestone in our joint efforts to address the population issue. Formulated on the basis of past experience, the Programme of Action calls for a holistic approach, one that works for progress on a wide range of fronts, including reproductive health/rights, gender equity, poverty alleviation, and the environment. It is a clear set of guidelines for the future.

Japan believes that the UNFPA must continue to play a major role in assisting countries in implementing the Programme of Action. It accordingly pledges its full support to the Fund, and towards the same end it wishes to propose that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the first Executive

Director of the UNFPA, the late Mr. Rafael M. Salas, and to join other delegations in commending Mrs. Nafis Sadik and her staff for their excellent work.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.5. I should like to announce that the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.5. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/49/L.5 was adopted (resolution 49/3).

The President (*interpretation from French*): I declare closed the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund. I should like, on behalf of the Assembly, once again to congratulate Mrs. Nafis Sadik for the excellent work she has done, along with her team, in heading the Fund following the demise of her outstanding predecessor, Mr. Rafael Salas. We offer Mrs. Sadik our encouragement as she continues her work for the benefit of all mankind.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.