

**Executive Board  
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Development Programme  
and of the  
United Nations  
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DRAFT REPORT ON THE ANNUAL SESSION  
GENEVA, 6-17 MAY 1996

Addendum

UNFPA SEGMENT

Chapter IV. MISSION STATEMENT OF UNFPA

1. The Director of the Information and External Relations Division (IERD) introduced the UNFPA mission statement. He reported that the mission statement was being presented in response to Executive Board decision 95/15. The draft mission statement presented to the Board was the result of numerous consultations over the course of the past 16 months beginning with a post-ICPD retreat of the UNFPA Management Committee, continuing through the Fund's Global Meeting in Rye, New York, in June 1995, where it was a prominent feature of the agenda. It was subsequently circulated in various versions to all UNFPA Professional staff, both in the field and in headquarters, and then, as a draft, to members of the Executive Board for their comments. The comments received from the staff and Executive Board members were incorporated into the mission statement insofar as possible while still maintaining the focus of the statement.

2. The Director of IERD said that the mission statement was designed to be used in the Fund's publications and for the media, public and staff as a brief statement of the purpose and principles of UNFPA. It would in no way alter the Fund's mandate, priorities, resource allocations or operational guidelines as set out for the Fund in various Executive Board decisions. The statement was seen as a public relations document intended for the general public, not as a United Nations document. Indeed, efforts had been made to make the language as clear as possible, accessible to those who might not be familiar with United Nations terminology.

3. The draft mission statement had been discussed with members of the Executive Board at an informal meeting of the Board on 23 April, 1996. At that time, members of the Board had made various comments and suggestions. In response to those suggestions, UNFPA had revised the draft mission statement somewhat and that revised draft was now being presented to the Board as a conference room paper. The Director briefly explained the changes and noted how they responded to the suggestions made by delegations. He then solicited comments on the revised draft from the Board.

4. Several delegations said that they were pleased with the revised draft and felt that it reflected accurately the comments made at the informal meeting. One delegation offered some amendments to the revised draft, asking that the first paragraph be modified to reflect that UNFPA had to act according to priority areas and in full respect of the state policies of recipient countries and that the fifth paragraph and the last sentence of the sixth paragraph be deleted since they were unnecessary.

5. The suggestion for modifications on the part of one delegation engendered a number of comments. Several delegations stated that if there were changes to be made then they also had suggestions they would like to make. However, many delegations felt that it was inappropriate to start revising the draft and did not wish to negotiate changes in wording.

6. One delegation proposed that in the interests of clarity the second use of the phrase "these goals" in paragraph 4 be made more explicit by substituting the phrase "population stabilization". The proposal had the support of numerous delegations, but several delegations felt that, in fact, it changed the meaning of the paragraph. One observer delegation reported that its Government had reservations on paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of the revised draft mission statement.

7. The discussion then turned on the question of whether the mission statement was a public relations document that could be issued by the Executive Director on her own authority, and on which the Executive Board could simply "take note", or whether it was a policy document that required endorsement by the Board. Both viewpoints were expressed by different delegations. The Board then called on the President for her advice, who asked the Executive Director for her views.

8. The Executive Director explained the process of how the mission statement was developed. It had originally been her idea, and, as stated by the Director of IERD, had been much discussed at the Rye meeting. When the Executive Director reported on those discussions to the Executive Board, members had also been very enthusiastic and had asked her to bring the statement to the Board for its input, which she had been very pleased to do. She had always seen that it was of value chiefly as an informational document to be used within UNFPA as well as with the general public. As such, it was entirely based upon the previously agreed policy directives of the Fund.

9. In response to some of the concerns raised by delegations during the discussion, the Executive Director noted that, as the mission statement said, UNFPA always and only acted at the request of Governments and therefore could in no way act contrary to Government wishes or national sovereignty. UNFPA also subscribed to internationally recognized human rights, and she thought that it was wise to include that in the statement since the largest number of questions posed to UNFPA by the media were about human rights. She reiterated once again that the mission statement did not, and could not, change the mandate of UNFPA.

10. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that a precedent had been set recently when the Executive Board of UNICEF had endorsed its mission statement. The mission statement of UNDP was being proposed to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board the following week. Therefore, she felt that it was necessary that the Board endorse the UNFPA mission statement as well.

11. In discussions that followed, the Executive Board decided to accept certain minor modifications in the text in order to conform with language previously agreed upon or to rectify editorial omissions. However, the Board could not agree to accept the amendment to change the words "these goals" to "population stabilization" even though several delegations supported the amendment. In the interests of consensus, the proposal was therefore withdrawn.

12. The Executive Board decided that it would be possible to follow the Executive Director's request and endorse the proposed mission statement as long as the comments made by various delegations during the discussions were noted in the decision. With that stipulation, the Board felt that it could endorse rather than take note of the statement.

13. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/25. Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 4 of the session, in particular the second paragraph on that item.

8 May 1996

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