



General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

30th plenary meeting

Thursday, 14 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 45

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now devote, in accordance with decision 58/529 of 17 December 2003, one day of plenary meetings to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Before proceeding further, I should like to recall that, on 8 October 2004, I transmitted a letter to the Chairmen of the regional groups and, through them, to the Member States, to consult on my intention to invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, to make an introductory statement this morning, following the statement by the Deputy Secretary-General.

As I have received no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, to make an introductory

statement this morning following the statement by the Deputy Secretary-General.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Ten years have elapsed since the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, whose anniversary we are commemorating today.

There can be no doubt that the Cairo Consensus ushered in a new era for peoples. Historic resolve was shown by the 179 States that met in Cairo on 13 September 1994 to express their commitment to improve the daily lives of peoples and to respect their rights. The commitment undertaken by States during the Cairo Conference and their interest in empowering women and in promoting gender equality was a decisive factor in improving the quality of life of all societies.

The Cairo Programme of Action has stood the test of time. Indeed, the texts resulting from the International Conference on Population and Development have taken on even greater relevance today, at a time when countries are working together to reduce widespread poverty, hunger, disease and gender inequality, and to bring about a more stable world.

In every region, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development serves as a reference document for countries — one that is essential to attain their development goals. Progress has therefore been made

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in improving family planning and in the creation of institutions and the adoption of legislation aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

Likewise, we note that significant progress has been made in educating and informing young people about reproductive health and about the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

I am firmly convinced that the Cairo Programme of Action is of crucial importance in the process of implementing a coherent and effective approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

It goes without saying that we must continue our efforts to ensure, in an integrated and coordinated manner, the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the major summits organized in the social and economic fields by the United Nations in the 1990s. That is imperative if we want to make progress by the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization in implementing the commitments we undertook and in attaining the Development Goals we set ourselves in the Millennium Declaration.

We do not need to wait for the sixtieth anniversary to consider the tragic situation of the nearly half a million mothers who die each year following childbirth. We do not need to wait until next year to consider the ravages caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We do not need to wait to fight more effectively against extreme poverty, which afflicts more than a billion people throughout the world.

In addition to the symbolic importance of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, this occasion should remind us of the urgent need to tackle the many problems that continue to affect the lives of our peoples, particularly in the developing world.

We must therefore, swiftly and in cooperation with the international financial institutions and other development partners, take essential measures to integrate population concerns into national development strategies. That will depend, above all, on the mobilization of the resources necessary to attain the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action.

The seriousness with which we implement that ambitious Programme and our determination to make it a priority in the General Assembly's discussions and

decisions related to development will attest, I am convinced, to our resolve to meet together the challenges that increasingly confront us. Let us act while there is still time. The future of humanity is at stake. By doing that, we will live up to our promises and considerably increase our chances of establishing a more peaceful and more prosperous world.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Three decades ago in Bucharest, the World Population Conference overcame political differences to adopt a groundbreaking, comprehensive Plan of Action. That Plan gave the world its first template for integrating population concerns into economic and social development, and it established the basic principles guiding population programmes today. Ten years later in Mexico City, despite serious disagreements on some questions, the International Conference on Population adopted additional recommendations that recognized the need for wider access to family planning and underscored the importance of issues such as the needs of adolescents and the role of men.

And then, of course, 10 years ago in Cairo, the world's efforts to address the intertwined challenges of population and development took another major step forward. The Programme of Action adopted there situated population issues more firmly in the broader quest for development and for poverty reduction. It linked them more prominently with sustainable development, reflecting the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Earth Summit — held two years earlier. It gave renewed prominence to education — particularly of girls — as an agent of change. It stressed the importance of reproductive health, gender equality and women's empowerment, and it gave wide and systematic recognition to the role of non-governmental organizations.

Today, countries throughout the world continue to use the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in forging the strategies and policies with which they hope to address population issues and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. And they are making substantial progress, building on the achievements of earlier decades.

The world is beginning to see the end of rapid population growth, which should help in the struggle against poverty and pollution. Life expectancy continues to rise in all regions of the world except Eastern and Southern Africa and Eastern Europe. Fertility continues to decline in virtually every region of the world. Couples have increasing access to the reproductive health programmes, contraceptives and information they need to choose the number and spacing of their children. These and other gains are profound and far-reaching, as they involve some of the most basic and intimate human experiences: birth, death and marriage; the joy of seeing grandparents survive or children spared needless suffering and death from a preventable disease.

Yet any satisfaction we may feel at the expansion of rights and freedoms involving population issues must be tempered by an acute awareness of the unfinished agenda, the fact that parts of the world are not sharing in this progress, and the daunting challenges that have emerged in the meantime.

High population growth remains a concern for much of the developing world, while some developed countries have expressed concern that their population is growing too slowly or, in some cases, even declining.

AIDS is taking a devastating toll — particularly in Africa, where it is reversing the rise of life expectancy in some countries and erasing decades of economic and social progress.

Declines in fertility and increased longevity mean that societies — developed and developing alike — are now wrestling with the wide-ranging implications of ageing, including the need for health care, pensions and safety nets and the need to ensure the social integration of older persons.

Rapid urbanization is yet another population challenge. So is international migration. Some 175 million people now reside in a country other than the one where they were born, and people continue to risk their lives in search of opportunity in wealthier countries. The vast majority of migrants are making meaningful contributions. In some cases, however, migration gives rise to economic, political and social tensions.

And we have yet to achieve universal access to vitally needed reproductive health services and family

planning, which we must do if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and advance the status of women. Instead, too many women and girls go without, leading to unplanned or mistimed births that keep families in poverty, threaten maternal and child health, and increase the rate at which girls drop out of school. And the persistence of widespread discrimination and violence against women and girls also helps to perpetuate the vicious circle of poverty and poor health.

It is only a little more than a generation since the international community collectively started addressing population and development issues. While much has been achieved and much has been learned, there have also been shortfalls and gaps. In the coming years and decades, we can and must go much further.

The regional review meetings that have taken place during the past two years have shown strong support for the Cairo consensus in all parts of the world. Civil society is also deeply engaged, including through such initiatives as the world leaders' statement that was formally presented to the United Nations yesterday. And our commemoration here today should contribute to preparations for the important events planned for the next year: the 10-year reviews of both the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences and the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration.

I hope Governments are ready to forge closer partnerships and provide the necessary resources, notably to the United Nations agencies that do such important work on the ground, helping people to improve their daily lives. As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, I would like to commend the United Nations Population Fund for its tireless and brave efforts in advancing the Cairo agenda. As we look ahead, I urge you to overcome your remaining differences on sensitive issues, reaffirm your full commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and intensify our common work towards a world of development and well-being for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the decision taken earlier and without setting a precedent, I give the floor to the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund for an introductory statement.

Ms. Obaid (United Nations Population Fund): It gives me great pleasure to address this commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Cairo was a turning point in development thinking, as it put the focus where it should be: on improving the quality of life of all people, no matter where they happen to be born and whether they are women or men. It put the focus on protecting human rights and the natural resources on which all life depends and bringing our world into greater balance. It recognized that what happens in one part of the world affects what happens on the other side, and that migration, urbanization, ageing, poverty and sustainable development are all interconnected.

All over the world, in every region, people are demanding information and services to prevent HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. In every country, an increasing number of women are speaking out against the violence they face in their lives, and a growing number of men are standing by their sides demanding that justice be served. Today as never before, young women are refusing to be victims of genital cutting, and in more and more cases, their parents and communities are supporting them in this choice. Young people who live in this global information age are demanding that they be let out of the dark when it comes to information and services to protect their reproductive health and exercise their reproductive rights.

Issues that were sensitive at the time of the conference in Cairo are now matters of open public debate. Never before, for instance, has there been so much discussion and outrage about the sexual violence that women face in conflict situations. There is agreement that much more needs to be done to address these massive violations of human rights. Indeed, the time that has passed since the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action has only confirmed its deep relevance and vision. For this, much credit belongs to the Secretary-General of the ICPD, Ms. Nafis Sadiq, my predecessor as the Executive Director of UNFPA. Today, I would like to pay tribute to Dr. Sadiq, who was and remains a tireless champion of the Cairo agenda.

The agenda is built on a simple premise: that providing universal access to education and reproductive health services and promoting women's

empowerment will reduce gender inequality and poor health, and help break the cycle of poverty in which millions of individuals and families now find themselves. If Governments make these critical investments in people, and use population data and policies, not to count people but to make people count, then a chain reaction will occur, leading to concrete progress that is not only measured by scientists, but most importantly, by individuals as they go about their daily lives.

The links in this chain reaction are increased choices and opportunities, increased knowledge and freedom from fear and ignorance, increased health and productivity and the enhanced ability of individuals to take control over their lives and their futures. This is what empowerment is all about, and this gives real meaning to the term "sustainable human development".

The ICPD Programme of Action is a global Programme based on universal ethical principles that reinforce human dignity and encourage the fulfilment of human aspirations. As the lead agency in implementing this agenda, UNFPA is committed to those human rights, and we are taking a culturally sensitive approach to programme development and implementation. Such an approach does not enforce solutions, but engages the concerned communities in a process of dialogue, so that they can reach out, out of their own positive values and institutions, and bring about the change that is necessary to implement the Programme of Action.

We should be proud of the progress that has been made in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action during the past ten years. Yesterday, an incredible roster of supporters of the Cairo agenda from across sectors and regions of the world was presented to the United Nations. The support provided through the world leaders' statement complements the renewed commitment expressed by the world's Governments and peoples in the regional meetings convened over the past two years in preparation for the tenth year anniversary. From Asia to Africa, from Europe to Latin America, Governments have reaffirmed their support of the Programme of Action, taken stock of the progress to date and identified priorities for the future.

However, while we celebrate our achievements, we must also be realistic. We continue to face key challenges, which must be urgently addressed. We must rise to the challenge of expanding the reach of

services and programmes to reach all people, especially the poorest, the young and the most marginalized. Where the ICPD Programme of Action has been implemented, we know it is working. We know how to reduce maternal and child mortality, we know how to reach young people so they can protect their health and lead productive lives, we know how to prevent HIV infection, and we know how to bring about safe motherhood.

However, the reach of these effective interventions is limited by a lack of human and financial resources. We must mobilize the necessary political will to provide the necessary resources. We have to involve more sectors and reach out to ministers of finance, so that sufficient domestic and international resources are allocated for population and reproductive health.

Allow me to conclude my statement today with a warning. If greater action is not taken to fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action, we will not only miss the opportunity to achieve the ICPD goals, we will also fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Together, we must ensure that the ICPD agenda is fully reflected in the 2005 Millennium Declaration review process. Ten years ago, the Governments of the world made a promise to bring about reproductive health for all by the year 2015. Today, I call upon all leaders to live up to this commitment and to keep the promises they made in the great city of Cairo ten years ago.

The President (*speak in French*): Before proceeding further, I should like to turn to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the meeting. Members are reminded that the list of speakers on this item will be closed this morning at 10.55 a.m.

I see no objection, it is so decided.

Next, we turn to the length of statements. In my letter dated 11 October 2004 to all permanent representatives, I urged all speakers to limit their statements in the debate to five to seven minutes, in order to allow the Assembly to hear all the speakers today. In view of the large number of delegations already inscribed on my list — and there are 65 so far — I therefore appeal to speakers to cooperate in this respect.

To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum which functions as follows: a green light will be activated at the start of the speaker's statement; an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the seven minutes; and a red light will be activated when the seven minute limit has elapsed.

Mr. Al-Mahmoud (Qatar) (*speak in Arabic*): I would like to thank you for giving me the chance to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in the Assembly.

Population issues encompass the most basic concerns of human existence. It is the birth, death and migration of individuals that form the essential components of demographic dynamics. For whole societies, these basic events produce rates of population increase or decrease and form the age structure of population and the geographic pattern of human settlements. These patterns have their influence on the social, economic, political and environmental issues that are central to the realization of the goals of sustainable development.

To address these concerns in a comprehensive manner, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was convened in Cairo in 1994. The Conference adopted a Programme of Action that addresses the full range of population issues, especially those related to economic and social development. The Programme of Action identified qualitative and quantitative goals in a number of key areas, including universal access to the knowledge and means for achieving reproductive health; goals regarding education, especially for girls; gender equity and equality; mortality and health, stressing infant, child and maternal mortality; and combating the emerging epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Above all, the Programme emphasized the need to provide the resources required to meet those goals.

The Programme of Action is not just a set of goals; it sets out a road map of practical policy and programmatic actions and the ways to reach each goal with specified time-bound targets. After 10 years, there is a need to review the progress made so far and identify the areas that require further work.

World population reached 6.4 billion persons in 2004. The current average annual growth rate of population is 1.3 per cent, significantly lower than the rate of 1.7 per cent during the period from 1975 to

1990. Although there has been significant gain in the universal reduction of fertility, the progress is uneven. While 100 out of 192 countries have met the goal contained in the Programme of Action of a life expectancy at birth greater than 70 years in the period 2000 to 2005, 36 countries, mainly in Africa, remain with life expectancies at birth lower than 50 years. Progress is by no means uniform, as many countries have witnessed a stagnation of mortality improvement, if not a decline in life expectancy. The causes are related to socio-economic transformations, the re-emergence of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and cholera, and the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to expand throughout the world, erasing decades of social and economic progress and producing a devastating impact on population in terms of increased morbidity and mortality. For some countries, the demographic impact of AIDS is enormous. This has serious consequences for their development prospects, as they are losing people in the most productive times of their lives.

Since the ICPD in 1994, migration has become a major issue of concern for the international community. As of mid-2000, approximately 175 million persons resided in countries other than where they were born. The ICPD Programme of Action accorded particular importance to the basic rights of migrants and encouraged more cooperation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination in order to maximize the benefits of international migration. Unfortunately, recent developments to curb immigration have also resulted in violations of the basic rights of immigrants.

In this respect, the Programme of Action adopted at ICPD stipulates, in paragraph 10.29, the following:

“The problems of refugees and displaced persons arising from forced migration, including their right to repatriation, should be settled in accordance with the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other international instruments and relevant United Nations resolutions.”

The Group of 77 and China call for a comprehensive arrangement to address all aspects of the issue of international migration. The Group looks forward to the high-level dialogue on this issue in 2006

and hopes that it will help in forging greater global consensus on issues pertaining to international migration and protecting the rights of all immigrants.

In the key areas of reproductive health, many countries have established reproductive health programmes, including family planning, expanded access to these programmes and improved their quality. Nevertheless, millions still lack access to the means of achieving reproductive health.

The Programme of Action also called for an increased national capacity to enhance primary health care and maternal and child health delivery networks. Many countries have made progress in this area but the pace is slow and there is a need for new impetus.

Infant and child mortality rates have improved, but 62 developing countries, accounting for 35 per cent of the world's population will not meet the goal of an infant mortality rate of 50 deaths per 1,000 live births for the period 2000 to 2005. There are still gaps in the implementation of the Programme of Action and this will have dire implications for the realization of development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.

The Programme of Action recommended time-bound targets on resource mobilization — \$17 billion by the year 2000 and \$18.5 billion by 2005. Despite a steady but slow increase in resources for population activities in the last 10 years, the target of mobilizing \$17 billion was not met; similarly, attaining the target of \$18.5 billion by 2005 remains a challenge for the entire world.

In conclusion resource gaps are especially large in poor countries, and the least developed countries depend entirely on official development assistance (ODA). Unless new, additional and sustained resources are provided to developing countries, it is unlikely that most of the goals and targets of the Programme of Action will be met. Instead, there will be a worsening of the population and reproductive health situation in many poor countries. The need to reach the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of countries' gross domestic product allocated for ODA and to fulfil the commitments made at Monterrey is most urgent.

The Group of 77 and China believe that this year's review should lead to a renewed commitment to the goals of the Programme of Action. This issue

should also receive high priority at the 2005 high-level event to be held next year, as the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without the full implementation of the ICPD goals.

The members of the Group remain committed to those goals and will make every effort to achieve them on time. We hope the international community will extend its full support to the Group's efforts to achieve those goals.

Mr. Van den Broeck (Netherlands): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

In view of the long list of speakers and the limited time available, I will not read out all of my statement. The full text will, however, be distributed in the Hall.

We are now at the halfway stage on the journey that started 10 years ago in Cairo. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was a landmark event in the history of people-centred development, human freedom and the emancipation of the individual. The ICPD Programme of Action takes a rights-based approach in which the well-being and free choice of individuals — rather than the population targets set by policy planners — are key. In 1994, the individual freed himself or herself from the population planners and took centre stage, saying, "I am not a number; I have rights; and my choice is my own".

The Programme of Action is firmly rooted in principles of human development, women's empowerment and gender equality and in the needs and rights of individuals, including young people. As is often the case, liberty and responsibility breed prosperity. When couples and individuals are enabled to make a free and informed choice about the number, timing and spacing of their children, families are smaller and population growth is slower, contributing to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

In a series of regional conferences and during the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, all marking 10 years since the ICPD, Governments throughout the world have reaffirmed their commitment to the Programme of Action. The worldwide consensus continues to be both universal and strong.

But we have not done enough. At all times we should remember the human beings who have died on our watch during the past 10 years whose lives we could have saved by fully living up to the commitments we made. They did nothing to deserve that, but we have not done enough to prevent it. Let us be clear: up to now, we — donors and programme countries alike — have collectively failed to deliver. And that is why we failed those people.

Women, in particular, bear the burden. Is it because they are women, whose deaths and ill-health happen in silence and out of sight? Would it be different if they were men? Still today, in our age of unprecedented prosperity, one woman dies during pregnancy and childbirth every minute. That is a double tragedy, given that millions of children each year are left without mothers.

Today is the day that we must reinvigorate our commitment. The ICPD gave us a Programme of Action, not a programme of intention. If we are to translate our commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals into concrete results by 2015, we must dedicate ourselves to the complete and improved implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. The way to 2015 leads through Cairo.

Before moving ahead, we must look back on the first part of our journey to see where we stand. Although our actions have fallen behind our intentions, progress has been made. For example, important progress has been made towards the ICPD goal of universal access to reproductive health services by 2015. The use of modern contraception has risen from 55 per cent of couples in 1994 to 61 per cent today. The increased use of family planning has contributed to the reduction in global fertility, with a consequent decline in the annual population growth rate to 1.3 per cent.

Governments embrace the ICPD Programme of Action as an essential blueprint for realizing development goals. Ninety per cent of countries

reporting took legislative, policy or programme measures to promote reproductive health and rights, to protect the rights of women and girls, to address gender-based violence, to reduce the gender gap in education and to increase women's participation.

Nearly all of the developing countries reporting have integrated population concerns into their development policies and strategies, mostly to address the interaction of population and poverty. Three quarters of countries reported having a national strategy on HIV/AIDS. One third said they had specific strategies aimed at high-risk groups. New partnerships, including public-private partnerships, have been formed, and the commitment of civil society in the form of non-governmental organizations and trade unions has been recognized.

However, we cannot afford to be complacent. Now, 10 years on, the Programme is more relevant than ever. We believe, in particular, that we face the following challenges.

First, as I stressed earlier, maternal mortality remains stubbornly high. There is no more telling manifestation of gender inequity than the death of a woman from the complications of pregnancy or childbirth. Complications from unsafe abortions are a major cause of maternal morbidity and mortality, especially among young, poor and rural women. Millions of women survive childbirth but suffer illness and disability. The empowerment of women, families and communities, and the encouragement of a shared sense of responsibility for pregnancy, are central to addressing the political, socio-economic and cultural factors that so often prevent women from receiving good-quality care.

Secondly, we are facing the scourge of HIV/AIDS. At the time of the Cairo Conference, 20 million people were infected with HIV. Today, that number has doubled. Some 14,000 people become infected with HIV every day, and the vast majority of those infections are transmitted sexually. Yet sexual transmission can be avoided. Condoms constitute a simple and affordable, yet life-saving commodity. The fight against HIV/AIDS cannot succeed without the universal provision of comprehensive reproductive health services. People at highest risk and most vulnerable to HIV infection, such as young people, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and sex workers, deserve our attention. Just like anyone

else, they should be provided with adequate sexual and reproductive health services, offered without stigma or blame, based on a full recognition of their rights and tailored to the realities of their lives.

Thirdly, the largest generation of young people in history, 1 billion strong, is now aged between 15 and 25 years — they are just entering reproductive life. In a world battered by HIV/AIDS, they must have access to reliable information services and supplies if they are to make responsible, potentially life-saving choices. Almost half of all new HIV infections occur among people younger than 25. It is a fact of life that some young people will have sexual relations. We must have the courage to speak of the everyday reality of sexuality and provide young people with the information they need. It is not just the right of adolescents to be informed; information is essential to survive. And nowadays silence means death.

Fourthly, there is an alarming shortfall in the supply of reproductive health commodities. Over the past ten years, donor support for reproductive health supplies, including contraceptives for family planning and condoms for HIV prevention, has declined. In sub-Saharan Africa, donors provide an average of 4.6 condoms per man per year. Based on an analysis of 49 countries, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that the financial shortfall in 2004 amounts to \$75 million. The real shortfall is likely to be triple that amount. Without the means to exercise them, rights are meaningless.

Fifthly, gender inequality is a continuing impediment to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and an important contributing factor to high maternal mortality ratios and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Many countries have introduced laws on gender-based violence, but these are often not enforced. Efforts promoting women's advancement are often susceptible to budget cuts. In order to improve the status of women, we should, for instance, eliminate gender gaps in education, increase access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, reduce discrimination in employment, property ownership and inheritance and stop gender-based violence.

Sixthly, the complex challenges of ageing populations, the long-term sustainability of pension systems and issues of international and internal migration and integration of diverse populations —

also, by the way, part and parcel of the Cairo agenda — are fully recognized by the EU.

Finally, reproductive health needs in conflict situations demand our attention. As a consequence of armed conflict and natural disaster, all the wrongs of society are magnified. One quarter of the world's refugees are women of reproductive age; one in five of these women is likely to be pregnant. The ICPD drew attention to the reproductive health needs of people in crisis situations. More deaths occur worldwide from preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth than from starvation.

As we all know, facing such daunting challenges requires financial means. That costs money. And that is why it is essential that we all live up to the financial commitments we made. The numbers 0.7 per cent, the official development assistance (ODA) promise; and 4 per cent, the ICPD target of allocating 4 per cent of ODA to sexual and reproductive health and rights and to population issues, will all sound familiar in this context. Almost all of us, developed countries in particular, but also developing countries, have failed to live up to our promises in that regard. However, some have done so because they were not willing; others, because they were not able. The EU is making steady progress in fulfilling its commitment on the ODA target announced at the International Conference on Financing for Development.

But it is not all about money. Political commitment also makes the world go round. Beyond all the celebrations and commemorative events of this special year, the Cairo agenda must remain high on our own political agenda. Political leadership is essential if we are to effectively address the challenges of the next decade.

To address the outstanding issues of the Programme of Action is a formidable challenge by itself. Indeed, it is a challenge made more difficult by attempts by some to roll back the ICPD agenda, but the ICPD stands as relevant today as it did in 1994.

What we need is a global partnership to improve the realities of people's lives. All sectors of society must be involved. Governments cannot and should not go it alone. The efforts of non-governmental organizations, local community groups and religious leaders are indispensable. We want to commend them and ask them to keep up the good work. The private

sector also has a crucial role to play. Development is everybody's business.

The global partnership for ICPD should ensure that reproductive health issues are adequately addressed in all development processes, ranging from poverty education strategy papers to next year's Millennium Development Goals event. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan wisely stated in Bangkok two years ago, "The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed". The EU stresses that these issues must, therefore, be included in the review of the Millennium Declaration in September 2005 and in the Secretary-General's reports on progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

I am proud to announce that the 25 member States and the Commission of the EU intend collectively to fill the entire reproductive health commodities gap of \$75 million in 2004 through a special contribution to the UNFPA Reproductive Health Commodity fund. The analytical work of the UNFPA has demonstrated that reproductive health services are some of the most cost-effective health interventions. A million dollars in reproductive health commodities will avoid the following human tragedies: 360,000 unintended pregnancies; 150,000 induced abortions; 800 maternal deaths; 11,000 infant deaths; and 14,000 deaths of children under five years of age.

After this Assembly session, we again go home with our work cut out for us. After today, the Cairo agenda must remain high on the international agenda. There is still plenty of work to do and there are still plenty of goals to achieve. Someone once said that goals are dreams with deadlines. We can translate these dreams into reality during this generation. The recipe is simple, the message is clear — less ideology, more reality; less lip service and more money. Our deadline is 2015.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to remind the Assembly that we must end our discussion today. We already have an evening meeting planned, so if everyone is going to have an opportunity to speak, and if we are to finish our work tonight, I would ask speakers to observe the time limit for making their statements.

I now call on the representative of Barbados, who will be speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): At the outset, Mr. President, let me thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Madame Louise Fréchette, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mrs. Thoraya Obaid, for their introductory remarks.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States of the United Nations on this agenda. We fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would, however, like to provide some perspectives of the progress being made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that are unique to the CARICOM countries.

The 2004 report of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) clearly states that much progress has been made during the last 10 years. Population growth has been slowed, the world has experienced some reduction in fertility and infant mortality has been reduced. In the case of the CARICOM countries, most have been experiencing a reduction in population growth, as well as a reduction in infant mortality, going even beyond the ICPD interim goals.

These achievements have been made largely as a result of national policies that have been put in place in many of the countries. In these policies, emphasis has been placed on improving the quality of life of their populations, through the implementation of programmes to alleviate poverty, provide adequate health services — including reproductive health services — adequate nutrition, and the development and enhancement of the status of women, including ensuring the protection of their human rights.

A rights-based approach to health has been adopted, particularly in respect of reproductive health, and the CARICOM countries have supported the implementation of programmes that make health care a right for all. Indeed, the right to health care is regarded

as a fundamental right without which none of the other rights can easily be achieved. Through programmes on reproductive health and education, efforts have been made to bring men and women together to build greater awareness of gender and reproductive-health matters.

A phenomenon in many Caribbean societies is the increasingly high percentage of elderly people among their populations. As a result of improvements in living conditions, countries in the Caribbean are experiencing changes in the age structure of their populations, and we are observing an increase in life expectancy rates and hence an increase in the number of older persons. This demographic trend has become a matter for concern for almost all of the countries of the subregion and has necessitated an assessment of the capacity of countries to provide basic social services such as health care and social security to meet the needs of the increasing number of older persons. Based on national policies on ageing, however, some programmes are already in place to provide social services to the elderly.

Faced with the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact, particularly on youth, in the Caribbean, many Governments have introduced strategies designed to support the capacity of the education and health-care systems, with a particular focus on reproductive health. They have also sought to establish national guidelines for prevention, treatment and care, and to eliminate the stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Another area of attention has been the promotion and defence of the human rights of girls and women by making them less vulnerable to sexual violence, thereby enhancing their capacity to protect themselves from infection.

On the issue of migration, one of the most dominant issues over the last 10-year review period has been the increasing number of emigrant retirees returning to their countries of origin after spending significant periods of time overseas, both in Europe and in North America. This has led to the need for Governments to put in place policies, programmes and resources to respond to the needs of that specific group of the population, given the impact of the dynamics of population movement on the socio-economic conditions of island countries.

There is also a direct linkage between the goals of the ICPD and a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly those

relating to achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. We believe that the progress that has been made in the implementation of the ICPD decisions will contribute to achieving a number of these MDGs as we approach the year 2015.

Indeed, we would argue that the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the first of the Millennium Development Goals, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not fully addressed.

Despite the progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action by CARICOM countries, a number of constraints have affected the pace and level of implementation. These include the availability of financial and human resources and the varying levels of institutional capacity of the countries of the subregion. We therefore see a need for continuous and additional resources, in line with the commitments made by countries in Cairo 10 years ago, in order to ensure the full achievement of the ICPD goals. Such resources will also help to strengthen the institutional capacity of many of our countries. In addition, partnership arrangements between government, the private sector and civil society, as well as those at the regional and international level, did not materialize to the degree needed to lead to a significantly higher level of implementation. We will certainly do more to work with partners to ensure that reproductive health and population issues are more fully integrated into national development plans and that the partners themselves understand the important role that they can play.

CARICOM countries are generally quite pleased with the progress that has been achieved. On this tenth anniversary of the ICPD, the CARICOM States Members of the United Nations would like to compliment the United Nations Population Fund for leading the global effort in the implementation of the Cairo Agenda. We reaffirm our commitment to the further implementation of the Programme of Action in the years to come. That commitment has best been expressed by the support of a number of heads of Government of the region for the leadership statement of the ICPD.

Ms. Sahlin (Sweden): Let me first underline that Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the Netherlands.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held at Cairo, was a groundbreaking event. Issues that used to be taboo are today on the international agenda, in particular sexual and reproductive health and rights. Unfortunately, the international community is not providing sufficient political support or funding to achieve the ICPD goals. Implementation of the Cairo Agenda is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Swedish Government recently decided that it will achieve its own goal of allocating 1 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance by the year 2006.

My Government fully supports the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). While the Organization has lost important financial support from other donors such as the United States of America, Sweden has continued to increase its contribution to the Fund. Next year we will continue to increase our support, with an additional \$11 million. Sweden also supports the invaluable work of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and other civil society organizations. Without them, we would not have come this far, and we will not succeed in reaching our goals without them.

I would like very briefly and also very openly to highlight seven areas of concern. First, all people should be able to have a satisfying and safe sex life. We, especially the States, must shoulder our responsibility to speak openly about these issues.

Secondly, young people need to have the means to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. They need sex education as well as condoms and other contraceptives. Too many actors today promote abstinence only. For many girls and women, that message is not enough, in view of the too-often-prevailing perception of women's subordination to men. Where rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread, abstention is not an alternative, at least not for women.

Thirdly, HIV/AIDS represents a huge threat to development. We know that 80 per cent of all new HIV/AIDS infections are spread through unsafe sex. It

is thus life-threatening and certainly contrary to a pro-life philosophy to spread false rumours that condoms are dangerous, as, for instance, actors within the Vatican are doing.

To be successful, we need to integrate HIV/AIDS and the sexual and reproductive health and rights agendas. Many of the poorest women do not have access to sexual or reproductive health services. Many women and girls are infected due to sexual violence, but studies also show that married women are more likely to be infected than unmarried women. In general, more attention must be paid to the role of boys and men and to their sexuality.

Focusing on the fight against HIV/AIDS, we often forget the individuals behind the illness. An AIDS-positive woman also has rights — rights to help her to make responsible choices. She needs access to information, education, health care and services, and to safe and legal abortions. People living with HIV/AIDS all too often suffer from discrimination. Several countries prohibit people infected with HIV/AIDS from entering their country. Why? I can not understand that, since we all know that HIV/AIDS is not transmitted through the air.

Fourthly, gender equality, which includes men's responsibility, is crucial in our common struggle. Women are still being discriminated against just because we are women. Women's empowerment is a key factor for securing women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. As long as there is an imbalance of power between women and men, we do not have fully democratic societies.

Fifthly, we must improve maternal health. The goal of decreasing maternal mortality and morbidity is very far away. Every day more than 400 women die — I repeat, every day more than 400 women die — as a result of illegal, unsafe abortions. The Swedish Government will continue to argue that every woman should have the right to choose a legal and safe abortion, to decide over her own body.

Sixthly, once again, all people should be able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and in all people I include women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender persons. Therefore I'm very sad that women's sexual actions as well as, for example, lesbians' and gay men's sexual actions are often punished in different ways. This is also often sanctioned or condoned by the State.

Seventh, persons with disabilities of course also should enjoy the same sexual and reproductive health and rights as everyone else. The Vienna Declaration, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, reaffirms that "all human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal and thus unreservedly include persons with disabilities" (A/CONF.157/23).

Finally, it is first and foremost States that have the responsibility to implement decisions of the ICPD. However, civil society organizations have important roles to play both in implementation on the ground and advocacy. We can all learn from each other and our task will be easier if we cooperate. My Government was a strong actor ten years ago and I can assure you that Sweden will continue to give our full support to the ICPD.

Mr. de Silva (Sri Lanka): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this important session of the General Assembly, and extend to you the warm best wishes of the Government of Sri Lanka for a successful stewardship of this meeting.

At the outset I wish to state that Sri Lanka and the Government of Her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga is fully committed to the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. In this regard, I wish to take the opportunity to highlight some of our achievements in the post-ICPD period, the challenges we face and the way forward in meeting both the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals.

During the past decades, Sri Lanka has continued to consolidate achievements in the fields of population, development and reproductive health. That period has also seen an acceleration of population and socio-economic change. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to make an early transition to adopt the concept of reproductive health and to formulate a comprehensive national policy on population and reproductive health. Based upon that policy, an action plan was developed to implement population, development and reproductive health activities in a broad-based and holistic manner. The concept of the well-woman clinic was introduced as far back as 1996.

Although HIV prevalence is relatively low in Sri Lanka, the Government is concerned about the potential threat that it poses, and places high priority on the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and

sexually transmitted infections in women. A policy on blood safety was developed in 1999. A comprehensive social support programme has been developed and supplemented with grant assistance from the World Bank and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to prevent the spread of HIV among vulnerable groups.

Sri Lanka's programme in the population and development field during the past decades has been significant. The rate of population growth has declined from 1.5 per cent in the early 1990s, to 1.1 per cent today. Life expectancy at birth for females and males is comparable to that of more developed countries, with 75.4 and 70.7 years, respectively. The infant mortality rate has been reduced to 13 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate ratio is about 50 per 100,000 live births.

Per capita income has continued to increase at a steady pace. Continued reliance on open economic policies with a human face and greater emphasis on human resource development has enabled Sri Lanka to achieve an average economic growth rate of 5 per cent during the past decade, despite the armed conflict in the north and east of the country.

Literacy rates are equally high for both males and females — 91 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively. This impressive indicator has placed Sri Lanka in a unique position in relation to other countries at a similar level of per capita income.

Considerable progress has been made in improving gender equity and development. With regard to institutional development, Sri Lanka had the Women's Bureau since 1978, even before the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Government adopted the National Women's Charter in 1993 and a separate ministry for women's affairs was established in 1997. Gender focal points have been appointed in sectoral ministries. Amendments to the penal code have been made to enhance the punishment for rape and other forms of sexual abuse and violence. Trafficking of women and children has also been made a criminal offence. A child protection authority has been established under Her Excellency, the President, to protect the rights of the children, particularly with regard to sexual abuse and trafficking.

A draft bill on domestic violence is under consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers. A bill on women's rights and gender policy is being formulated.

In spite of the progress made in the field of maternal health, still, two thirds of maternal mortality and morbidity are due to preventable causes. Although maternal and childcare services have reached the great majority of the population, the quality of service needs improvement. The people's demand for better quality service, is the result of both rising income and education levels of the population. Although the fertility rate is at replacement level, significant fertility differences still exist between socio-economic groups and between the various geographic areas.

The goals of the ICPD Programme of Action require the precondition of good governance and peace. In that regard, I wish to state that the impact of the armed conflict in the north and east of the country for nearly two decades, which resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons and strained the provisions of health and reproductive health services, is gradually declining.

There is no doubt that the benefit of the peace dividend would be widespread and positive. Population and development issues are very much interrelated. International development that brings about economic shocks causes adverse effects on developing countries. That, in turn, affects the implementation of the population and reproductive health programmes.

Therefore, I wish to urge the international donor community to increase their contributions to enable developing countries to mitigate such external shocks, which are beyond our control, to enable population and reproductive health programmes, including poverty alleviation programmes, to be effectively implemented.

We all realize that in order to consolidate the gains that Sri Lanka has achieved thus far and to move forward to face emerging challenges in the coming years, a broader and deeper partnership between the Government, civil society and the international community is essential. I wish to state that Sri Lanka has effectively and efficiently utilized domestic and international resources in the realization of our population and reproductive health goals.

We are indeed grateful to the donor community and in particular to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the assistance extended to Sri

Lanka to implement its programmes effectively. Such continued assistance will certainly enable us to meet the International Conference on Population and Development goals and the Millennium Development Goals during the given time frame.

Mrs. Argaña (Paraguay) (spoke in Spanish): It is an honour for Paraguay to participate in this important meeting commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Paraguayan Government attaches special importance to the ICPD and follows it closely, because of its important recommendations and conclusions and, most importantly, in order to assess how far we have come in ten years of implementation.

Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to continue to make progress in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action on population and development of 1994, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the regional implementation strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the agreements reached subsequently at the regional level, such as the Santiago Declaration, the Puerto Rico consensus and the Mexico City consensus, which were endorsed recently at the thirtieth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) held in July 2004.

Regarding the actions adopted by my own country to this end, I must mention that we have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. This international instrument has promoted genuine reform through the formulation of domestic legislation that meets international standards through comprehensive public policies with a gender perspective and through a strengthened national network that encourages dialogue and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors. The international conferences on women, and especially the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 and its follow-up, have also promoted legal and normative advances for gender equality and equity in a national context of strengthening democracy.

The strategic nature of the Cairo issues had already drawn the attention of the Paraguayan Government before the conference itself. Thus, our national constitution of 1992 is a basic legal framework in which articles were introduced on

reproductive health, maternity and paternity, family planning and maternal and child healthcare. This provided a legal framework for the State's implementation of reproductive health and family planning policies, with the participation of the private sector and civil society organizations in providing education and services.

It is important to point out that we have had many advances in public policies related to gender, but we have also confronted setbacks. The country has health policies basically in keeping with the conclusions of Cairo and Beijing. We thus established the National Reproductive Health Council through a 1994 decree, which adopted technical standards for pregnancy, natal and post-natal care, reproductive health and guidelines for epidemiological monitoring of maternal health and mortality. These are the most important advances in how to strengthen action aimed at the health of women. Subsequently, we adopted the National Plan on reproductive health for 1997 to 2001, which is a post-Cairo version, the National Policy for comprehensive healthcare for women and the National Plan for comprehensively addressing the issue of adolescence. The second National Plan for equal opportunity for women and men for 2003 to 2007, adopted by decree number 1958 of 2004, contains nine spheres of action and one of them relates to the comprehensive healthcare for women, from the standpoint of gender as a cross-cutting issue. We also have the second National Plan on sexual and reproductive health for 2003 to 2008, which will contribute to improving the quality of life of our country's population, to the reproductive rights of individuals and to social and gender equality.

Paraguay has made very important progress in the struggle against violence in the family. In 1995, we ratified, through law number 605, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women. In order to implement the Convention, we developed a National Plan Regarding Violence Against Women, which the State has been implementing since 1996.

We have a National Programme to combat AIDS and a Strategic Plan for 2001 to 2004 to improve the quality of life of those infected. While the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Paraguay is relatively low in comparison with other countries, there is a steady increase in the number of women infected. This serves as a warning and signals the need to take specific action for

prevention, care and non-discrimination against women infected with HIV.

In regard to the subject of population, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were two important events in the field of demographics. The first was the beginning, in 2001, of the process of developing Paraguay's population policy, which was submitted to the National Congress and to other social sectors in the country for consideration, in the hope of reaching the broadest possible consensus for its final promulgation. This was designed as an instrument for short-, medium- and long-term implementation in order to empower the population as a strategic resource to promote sustainable development. The second was the National Population and Housing Census of 2002, which made it possible to gather more updated information on the socio-demographic situation of the country.

In the field of education, I would like to mention that, in 1996, the Ministry of Education and Culture published the strategic plan for educational reform, entitled "Paraguay 2020: Let us face the educational challenge". This document outlines our national educational policy. In 1995, we established the National Programme for equal opportunity and results in education, with a view to including the gender component at all levels and in all types of education as well as in curriculum reform, in educational materials, in teacher's training and in the educational community. In this regard, we succeeded in introducing into teacher training programmes issues such as gender roles and equal treatment in the structure and role of the family, sexually transmitted diseases, respect for cultural and religious diversity. Along the same lines, work is being done to review and adjust guidelines for evaluating textbooks and educational materials.

We know that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Government, given the international commitment to attain the goals by the year 2015, has entrusted the design of a national strategy to fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion to a group of institutions. The strategy will be implemented over several terms of Government.

It is also relevant to point out that in Paraguay, we are committed to improving substantially the distribution and performance of the social budget in

order to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The Government enjoys significant cooperation with the United Nations aimed at monitoring the social budget and at mitigating poverty and inequality.

Another important area of progress has been the establishment in the middle of 2000 of a tripartite commission to follow-up the Cairo Programme of Action. That is an important body for dialogue, agreement and international cooperation and to follow-up the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. It is composed of institutional representatives of the Government, civil society and cooperating United Nations bodies.

Those are just some of the measures adopted by Paraguay that reflect the great importance that we attach to the Cairo objectives, the MDGs and the political will we have to give those objectives concrete expression. At the subregional level, that includes technical cooperation received from international bodies that is also given to different countries of the region.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Paraguay, we believe that the United Nations Population Fund is a forum of fundamental importance for assessing the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. Ten years after the Conference, there remain shortcomings in some areas that require new efforts, through which — in the case of Paraguay, through our Ministry for Women's Affairs and the support of the international community — we hope to strengthen implementation of public policy and comprehensive programmes in a number of areas.

Lastly, we congratulate Mrs. Thoraya Obaid, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, and Mrs. Marisela Padrón, Director of the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund, for their dedication to the subject before us and for their contribution to the progress of women in our countries.

Mr. Kamugisha (Uganda): In 1994, ten years ago, in Cairo, we committed ourselves as Governments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. We agreed to put human beings at the centre of our population and development programmes. We committed ourselves to a comprehensive reproductive health agenda including sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.

We further committed ourselves to address gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women.

I am glad to report that in Uganda, since Cairo, we formulated a comprehensive National Population Policy for sustainable development. Our Government's health policy has since encouraged a primary health care approach that is comprehensive and pro-poor people. Since 1994, the reproductive health concept has taken root. A national reproductive health policy and guidelines that aim at increasing access are now available. Reproductive health has been identified as a priority programme and my Government will continue to increase funding for reproductive health.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health will continue to work with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that this is reflected in our sector-wide approaches and other reforms such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In Uganda, we recognize the complementary role of civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations and cultural institutions, and we have worked with them, as well as other development partners like the United Nations Population Fund, to implement programmes to improve the welfare of our people.

As a result of those combined efforts, we have witnessed, since Cairo, progress in some sectors. For example, in Uganda, we have witnessed a relatively rapid decline in the HIV/AIDS epidemic from a high level of 30 per cent in 1992 to 6.2 per cent currently. Uganda recognizes that strong leadership coupled with a clear, focused policy framework for coordination are particularly critical to achieving progress.

Uganda's success also depended very much upon the Government providing an enabling environment for all stakeholders to play their role according to their comparative advantages, using a multisectoral approach and a strategy that adopted an "ABC" model (where A stands for abstinence, B for being faithful and C for condom use). Our challenge on the HIV/AIDS front is to maintain the momentum of success without being complacent, as we roll out a programme to ensure access to anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs by all those that need them.

Regarding gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women, we have involved women in many aspects of matters of governance. In our national Parliament, 24 per cent of the seats are occupied by women and 25 per cent of the Cabinet is also made up of women. In Uganda, we have women judges,

women Permanent Secretaries and women in others senior civil service positions. Since 1997, our Universal Primary Education programme has not only increased primary school enrolment three-fold but has also removed the disparity in enrolment of boys and girls as well as reducing dropout rates of girls.

Despite those achievements, Uganda, like many other developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, continues to face severe challenges in our development agenda. For example, in the field of reproductive health, both infant and maternal mortality have not improved appreciably. In Uganda, infant and maternal mortality rates stand at 88 per 1000 and 505 per 100,000, respectively. Needless to say, these figures are unacceptably high.

Accessibility and affordability of HIV/AIDS drugs remains another challenge. Our experience in Uganda is that HIV/AIDS affects all categories of people. However, youth, women and the poor are disproportionately affected.

It is against this background that Uganda believes that on this occasion, as we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the historic Cairo meeting, we should seriously reflect on our past performance as we chart a new course for the future.

We, in developing countries, continue to face challenges in reproductive health and family planning, including reproductive health commodities and supplies. Our health services face serious challenges in their capacity to deliver services. Those challenges include human resources and infrastructure. We need to continue working with our development partners on these particular concerns, as well as strengthening our South-South partnerships in the field of population and development.

Uganda also feels very strongly that our population and reproductive health programmes on the one hand, and HIV/AIDS programmes on the other, need to build strong linkages and collaborative efforts. The case for integrating and mainstreaming reproductive health in HIV/AIDS programmes is compelling now more than ever before, especially in view of the scarcity of resources. Otherwise these will remain as missed opportunities.

Uganda would like to put on record our strong appreciation for the excellent work done by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and our other

partners in supporting our population and reproductive health goals and objectives. Uganda appeals to our development partners to continue with the support that they have given to UNFPA in the past, and to do even more. In the same vein, Uganda feels that as we focus on the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by the year 2015, we need to remember that they will not be reached unless we attain the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Ms. Ameline (France) (*spoke in French*): We have gathered here at a key stage in the process begun 10 years ago at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), a major event in that sphere.

Addressing issues related to the development of populations worldwide undoubtedly raises the question of resolving poverty, since the link between those issues is clear and winning the fight against poverty is universally recognized as one of the essential conditions for sustainable development. It was recently stated in this Hall that the fight against world poverty is essential for the security of developed and developing countries alike.

How can we fail to recall the impetus given by President Jacques Chirac and President Lula da Silva, President Lagos Escobar and Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero to this fight, which on 20 September resulted in the New York Declaration on the Action against Hunger and Poverty? How can we fail to welcome the impetus generated by the mobilization around that Declaration? That initiative must be kept in mind in addressing the issues that concern us; I will return to it in a moment.

We fully subscribe to the statement just made by the presidency of the European Union. I wish at this point to thank Ms. Nafis Sadik, at whose initiative the World Leaders Statement in Support of ICPD was issued, signed by several heads of State, other prominent individuals and institutions, to promote the implementation of the commitments undertaken at Cairo 10 years ago. Her initiative and tenacity are encouraging and full of hope.

We are living in a time of global challenges. France is building ties and cooperation among countries, especially between North and South, in a spirit of fraternity, in order, as the President of France has said, "to put our partnership at the service of a world of justice and peace; a world of growth and well-being;

a world of collective responsibility; a world that shares knowledge and respect for cultures and identities".

We have a new vision of international solidarity. We believe that the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development was an important turning point in demographic policies.

In order to implement its commitments, France has undertaken a number of actions with its partners in the developing countries. I would like to highlight two of them here. First, in the North-South partnerships on population and development and in the promotion of equality between men and women, important work is being done today with our partners in the countries of the South. Those partnerships are being developed in diverse sectors at the institutional level, in the field and in research.

We have also initiated effective triangular cooperation among France, Tunisia and Niger on women's and children's health in the Kollo health district in Niger. The organization Equilibres et Populations is particularly involved in transmitting people's needs and in mobilizing them around health and reproductive issues, in collaboration with parliamentarians.

The International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, to be held in Strasbourg, France, on 18 and 19 October 2004 will give us an opportunity to reaffirm our support for the ICPD through the mobilization of our partners from the South.

We have emphasized the importance of preserving the achievements of the ICPD and its Programme of Action at meetings of the United Nations regional commissions and at the March session of the Commission on Population and Development, devoted to this theme. We also reaffirmed it in Geneva, at the European Population Forum, held in January 2004.

We have also been supporting, since 1988, the establishment of scientific partnerships for training and research in the framework of our Centre for Population and Development, which encompasses all French demographic research institutions and our research partners from the South.

France's commitment and cooperation on population issues can also be seen at the international level. France has long been firmly engaged with those

issues, in close cooperation with its European partners. In those areas, the action of the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) is essential. In our view, UNFPA is an effective, active agency, present in the field, and we fully support it.

Its Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, who has just been reconfirmed in a new mandate by the Secretary-General, can count on our active involvement in promoting and defending women's rights, especially at regional conferences on population and women's rights. We also intend to continue our support for UNFPA action in the field. In 2002-2003, we carried out two joint projects towards the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action — in Madagascar and in Côte d'Ivoire — and a project in Morocco on support for women victims of violence. A regional project is also being developed in the Horn of Africa, in Eritrea, with the French non-governmental organization Médecins du Monde as our partner and with UNFPA as the main funder.

But continued vigilance is called for. Ten years after the Cairo Conference, the results of the policies that have been followed vary widely from one country to another. While progress has been made, the challenges nevertheless remain enormous. In some cases — unfortunately too many — there has been absolutely no forward movement because of political, ideological or religious impediments.

I can only express my delight that the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Ms. Wangari Maathai. The investment and energy this woman has given for conservation and improvement of the environment in Africa as well as for respect for fundamental human rights, make her a symbol and an example for world peace and democracy and for the development of populations, through the jobs created through reforestation. The award also bears enormous hope and incentive for future mobilization. I pay tribute here, through Wangari Maathai's action, to the incredible energy expended by African women for development and towards strengthening respect for the environment of their countries.

Faced with the new challenges of the twenty-first century — fighting poverty, protecting our planet and promoting sustainable development — our partnerships must be universal and must serve the sustainable development of populations. In that spirit, the

gatherings of 2005 oblige us to have a true global partnership.

I would like solemnly to propose, in the spirit of next year's tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, that we create a real partnership for Beijing to allow us all, together, to face the great debate of our society at the beginning of this new century.

France is determined to meet the challenges of the new century not only with progress for our societies, but also with progress for our democracies and for all humankind. As Gabriel García Márquez put it, let us not ask what the century can give us; let us say that it expects everything from us.

Mr. Hussain (Pakistan): First of all, on behalf of Pakistan's delegation I would like to briefly describe the demographic profile of Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world. In terms of population size, with its current population of 151 million, Pakistan is the fourth largest country in Asia and second among the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries. The current population growth rate of Pakistan is estimated at 1.9 per cent per annum, its total fertility rate per woman is 4.1 and the contraceptive prevalence rate is 34 per cent.

If the same demographic characteristics prevail, Pakistan's population will reach around 195 million in the year 2020. Under that scenario, it will take almost 60-70 years to stabilize the population of Pakistan. That is an alarming situation for Pakistan and a cause of serious concern.

Pakistan was a willing signatory to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (POA) in 1994 in Cairo. However, several disadvantages have hampered its efforts to implement the ICPD-Programme of Action at the desired pace. Prior to the ICPD, Pakistan suffered from weak political commitment, lack of adequate resources, shifts in population policies, and socio-cultural rigidities. The situation has changed substantially since 1994. The present Government attaches the highest priority to the issue of population and to ensuring sustainable development in the country.

Elimination of the gender gap in basic education and literacy is the cornerstone of Government policy

for social development in general, and education in particular. That has led to some reduction in demographic pressure, which in the past few decades had impeded socio-economic development. While Government budgetary allocations since the ICPD have kept on increasing for the social sector, in particular for population, we still face resource constraints, although the progress achieved has been good. Pakistan has scarce resources to allocate across competing demands, at a time when these are most urgently required.

We appreciate the fact that the ICPD recommendations have introduced a new paradigm that has heralded an era of global population and development initiatives. Please allow me to dwell a little bit on how Pakistan has tried to implement the ICPD agenda. Pakistan has fully embraced the new paradigm and has reformulated its population and development policy, which focuses on meeting the necessities of the people. The population policy is designed to achieve social and economic revival by curbing rapid population growth and thereby reducing its adverse consequences for development. It is intended to achieve a reduction in dependency ratios, to alleviate pressures on dwindling resources and to help in the reduction of poverty.

The population policy has several wide-ranging consequences for the economy, the polity, human rights and the long-term prosperity of Pakistan. It places emphasis on securing sustained political commitment and mobilizing broad-based support. At the same time, it is consistent with the country's national laws and development priorities, and with the religious, ethical and socio-cultural values of the people. In fact, we have adapted the principles of the ICPD to our own social, economic and cultural realities.

We are pursuing the ICPD agenda by creating an enabling environment for the implementation of our population and development policy. The essential message of the policy is to improve the quality of life of every Pakistani through a reduction in rapid population growth by providing high quality and readily accessible reproductive health and family planning services. The policy aims at bringing about social and demographic change, particularly through improvements in education and the status of women. It recognizes the concerted efforts that are required to address the issue of population and development in its multiple facets, through the collaborative efforts of a broad range of stakeholders, including public and

private institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Important elements of the policy, directed towards the public sector programme, have been incorporated in the current Five Year Plan from 2003-2008. That is to ensure that the population factor and such concerns are appropriately included in the process of development planning. Population and development interrelationships and inter-linkages have been stressed not only in the population sector, but also other closely related sectors such as education, health, employment, the development of women, and the environment among other areas.

The population, education and health sectors have also been recognized as cross-cutting issues in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) recently finalized by the Government of Pakistan with the aim of reviving broad-based equitable growth and the reduction of poverty in the country.

The important area of focus in the post-ICPD period is the transition to reproductive health including family planning. We have made substantial progress in improving reproductive health indicators as the total fertility rate has fallen and the contraceptive prevalence rate has also increased considerably. The infant and maternal mortality rates have also registered appreciable decline. Our reproductive health indicators, however, still require considerable improvement to match international standards.

As already stated, our efforts will continue by following a multisectoral approach with the involvement of all partners in the public and private sectors in order to advance the ICPD Programme of Action and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan clearly provides equal rights to men and women. We ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, conditional only on the provisos of our Constitution. In line with the ICPD recommendations, the National Policy on Women Development and Empowerment (NWPD) has been announced and is being implemented. The Policy comprises three inter-related elements: i) integration of gender issues into all sectors and programmes of action; ii) supporting and expanding the public role of

women, and iii) involving women in planning, management and the implementation of projects.

One third of the seats have been reserved for women in local councils, while around 20 per cent in the provincial and national legislatures. Consequently, women have also been elected against their reserved seats. Under the devolution plan, 40,000 women were elected as Councillors and Naib Nazims, for the local Councils in 2001.

I am confident that Pakistan is ready to accept the challenges that lie ahead. Our goals are clearly articulated and I am confident that we are on the right track. However, our success or failure will depend ultimately on our ability to operate in an unfavourable environment because of the severe resource constraints. I am optimistic that donors and the international community will stand by us in these difficult times.

Mrs. Chancy (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It has already been ten years since more than 180 countries adopted the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It is now also the time to take stock. On the basis of the major goals set forth in the Cairo Programme of Action, we can state that there has been progress made. But much remains to be done.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations Population Fund, which is doing a great job. I also take this opportunity to thank all those who supported my country during the recent natural disasters.

The problem of the environment and population is widely debated, but the main issue is to establish coherent policies in that area. National administrative structures must promote the coordination of those policies. I would note that the necessary balance between population and the environment requires the resolution of such terrible, pressing problems as hunger and poverty, without minimizing other political and social problems.

My country is an example of that. We are now facing a multidimensional crisis in the social, economic, political, environmental, health and other fields. I would stress that the participation of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti in the disarmament of armed gangs is essential and I thank the international community for its support.

The political turmoil that afflicted Haiti from late 2003 to early 2004 ravaged and weakened a population that was already exhausted by a silent humanitarian crisis. In addition to the floods that struck certain parts of the country in May 2004, a few weeks ago hurricane Jeanne hit the coast of Haiti, killing almost 3,000 people and injuring several hundred thousand others.

It is essential that my Government take all necessary steps to halt environmental degradation and to improve the standard of living of our people significantly. If we are to do so, the participation of all active members of our society — women in particular — is crucial.

I wish to refer to the women and young girls of my country, who represent 52 per cent of our population. A special effort must be made to enable the women of Haiti fully to play their part and to be full stakeholders in finding and implementing solutions to promote the country's development.

In countries like ours, extreme poverty is a major obstacle for women and men alike when real choices, such as the choice of services and opportunities to improve their lives, have to be made. Inequalities and discrimination limit even further the choices available to girls and women. The myriad political and economic crises in Haiti have impeded our full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, particularly with regard to access to health services and basic education and the prevention of violence against women. By increasing services for safe motherhood — obstetric care in particular — we can save millions of lives. Comprehensive health care for women also means respect for their physical and mental integrity.

During periods of widespread repression, such as after the 1991 coup d'état and during the recent political upheavals in Haiti, sexual violence against women has been used as a weapon of repression and deterrence. Such exceptional violence arises out of the more widespread practice of day-to-day violence against women. If we are to change such behaviour and to ensure that combating violence against women remains an ongoing concern, we must invest in far-reaching education programmes. The transitional Government in Haiti — which is seeking, *inter alia*, to lead the country towards free, fair and democratic elections in 2005 — has identified four strategic axes for mainstreaming gender equality in its Interim Cooperation Framework for the period 2004-2006.

For Haiti, a country with many citizens living abroad, the issue of migration is of major concern. It is time for the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach to the issue. Constructive dialogue should be initiated between the countries of origin and the migrant host countries, enabling us more coherently to address the problems of xenophobia, discrimination and the integration of migrants. The Cairo Programme of Action is of great relevance in that respect, meeting an urgent and real need for Haiti.

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Haiti, to thank the international community for pledging, last July in Washington D.C., to contribute financially to the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework. We should have preferred, however, that the priority accorded quite properly to humanitarian assistance following the recent natural disasters not delay disbursements that are already procedurally so long and complex.

Mr. Sidibe (Senegal) (*speak in French*): I am delighted to speak at this important plenary meeting devoted to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, held on African soil in Cairo, Egypt, and to offer the contribution of my country, Senegal, to this collective exercise assessing our common action.

In fulfilling that pleasant duty, I wish first to reiterate to you, Sir, the conviction of the delegation of Senegal that, under your enlightened guidance, this session of the General Assembly will confidently address the major events that are on our agenda for 2005.

The past decade was rich in conferences and summits at which priorities were established, objectives agreed, strategies developed and the means of implementation identified in the pursuit of sustainable economic and social development.

And yet, evaluation after evaluation, the conclusion has invariably been the same. The progress made since those meetings is clearly significant, but unfortunately falls far short of the commitments undertaken. The Conference whose tenth anniversary we commemorate today is no exception to that rule, as we see from the fine report recently published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in document E/2004/25, containing a review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the

International Conference on Population and Development. The report highlights the disparities among regions and among social sectors within countries in respect of successes achieved and difficulties encountered.

With regard to the specific situation of Africa, I had the honour to preside over the regional ministerial review conference held in Dakar in June. At that meeting, the following nine subjects were discussed: population, poverty, environment and sustainable development; equality, gender equity and the advancement of women; the family, its role, rights, composition and structure; children and youth; reproductive rights and health; HIV/AIDS; population distribution, urbanization and migration; crises and their effects on populations; and the mobilization of resources for the implementation of population policies and programmes.

On each of those topics, we identified the impediments to the implementation of the Cairo commitments and proposed relevant strategies for reorienting our action. We also adopted a declaration whereby we reaffirm our countries' commitment to pursuing the implementation of the objectives of the Ngor/Diarama declaration and the Cairo Programme of Action, and the need to strengthen, with respect for the cultural realities of each country, our national programmes of action to ensure a decrease in demographic growth, the promotion of the status of women, the reproductive health of adolescents, the reduction of maternal and infant/child mortality, the balanced distribution of population across our national territory, the control of unbridled urbanization and the protection of vulnerable target groups, such as children and the elderly.

Thus, we Africans have made a clear-sighted diagnosis and issued a series of recommendations, outlined in the Dakar declaration. Can we reasonably expect, however, to attain the objectives of the Cairo Conference if nothing is done to counter the persistence of extreme poverty, the high rate of HIV/AIDS infection and the armed conflicts roiling our countries?

And yet, the means to achieve our shared ambitions do exist. They involve a consistent mobilization of resources, together with the integration of our population concerns into our development plans, and in particular our poverty reduction strategy papers.

We feel that this is essential if we are to avert the danger that a large number of African countries could miss the 2015 meeting of those countries that will have achieved the Millennium Development Goals.

In referring to the important role of international support and the considerable contribution made by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to my country, I cannot conceal the fact that the success of our policies will depend to a great extent on a steady national effort sustained by clear-sighted policy. The need for such political far-sightedness explains why the Government of Senegal, in implementing the Cairo Programme of Action, has relied not only on traditional institutional mechanisms for the coordination of its population policy, but also on a strengthened partnership with various stakeholders, including parliamentarians, religious leaders, journalists and traditional communicators.

Examples of my country's ongoing efforts include its health and reproduction programmes, whereby special efforts are made to ensure the population's free access to health services, and our struggle against HIV/AIDS, the low incidence of which bears witness to the effectiveness of our early reaction and our continuous monitoring of that devastating scourge.

Today's meeting is timely in that it is being held in the context of preparations for the high-level plenary meeting to conduct a five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals. We feel that the concrete proposals that emerge from this discussion will contribute usefully to that important event.

In conclusion, I turn to the Executive Director of UNFPA and her colleagues in my country to express the full satisfaction of the Senegalese Government and our President at the effectiveness and devotion with which they are executing our country programme.

Mr. Tutkushev (Kazakhstan) (spoke in Russian): I wish at the outset to congratulate all members on reaching the important landmark of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. That Conference played a decisive role in elaborating common international approaches to resolving problems in the area of population and development.

Over the past 10 years, States Members of the United Nations have made some progress in

developing national policies to mainstream demographic and gender issues. Kazakhstan was no exception to that rule. Our country has consistently implemented broad political, economic and social reforms to create a democratic State with a market economy.

In December 2001, our Government adopted a strategic plan for the country's development to 2010, prioritizing a population development strategy within our State policy. It seeks to improve life expectancy, encourage a higher birth and to reduce maternal, infant and child mortality. Kazakhstan has implemented a gender policy concept since 2003. In seeking to resolve gender-related issues, we have actively involved a national commission for the family and women, under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is a reliable mechanism for implementing the State policy of protecting the political rights and legitimate interests of the family, women and children. The national commission and the Government have been drafting a State gender-policy strategy, clearly delineating the main areas of action, including the economic, social and political spheres. In that context, we should note the growing role played by the non-governmental organizations in the public and political life of Kazakhstan.

And yet, despite significant progress in ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, our Republic still faces a number of problems in that area. Women constitute almost half of the working population of Kazakhstan, and yet remuneration rates for men and women differ significantly, since women tend to work in poorly-paid sectors of the economy. Thus, one important aspect of drafting and adopting solutions for improving the social status of women is their status in the labour market. Greater attention should be given to the issue of enhancing the representation of women among decision makers.

As has been noted, reproductive health care issues and the reduction of maternal and child mortality are top priorities for the Government of Kazakhstan. In recent years, we have broadened the network of State medical establishments and increased public health funding. State programmes have been adopted to develop rural areas up to the year 2010, in which the emphasis is on developing social infrastructure. We have adopted laws on reproductive rights, on enriching flour with iron derivatives and vitamins, and on the iodization of kitchen salt. All of

this will, I am sure, have a positive impact on reproductive health and especially on the health of women and children.

The situation with regard to reproductive health is not entirely satisfactory. The female health index is relatively low and a rather large number of women suffer from anaemia in certain ecologically disadvantaged regions of the country, especially in the Semipalatinsk and Aral Sea areas. That indicator is rising continuously. Maternal mortality and pregnancy complication rates remain high because of the inadequate availability and poor quality of prenatal care, health care and nutrition for women.

There is a problem with HIV/AIDS infection in the country. Women account for one quarter of those infected and the number of children born to those women is growing. We are particularly concerned at the increase in breast cancer, which has recently become the foremost cancer affecting women.

Mindful of the acute need to address those serious problems, which are directly related to population and development, the Government and Parliament of Kazakhstan have taken robust action comprehensively and effectively to implement the major decisions adopted in Cairo.

In September 2004, Kazakhstan held a summit of parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region. Participants in that summit reaffirmed the commitment of the Asia-Pacific countries to implementing the undertakings of the Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action. The parliamentarians all agreed that it is possible to meet the current challenges of population and development only if those serious issues are considered as parts of a whole. The conference also demonstrated that there is an urgent need to develop a long-term strategy in the area of population and sustainable development in the countries of Asia and the Pacific. That fact was recognized by all participants in the summit, who pledged there and then to approach their Governments with appropriate proposals.

In conclusion, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to one very important point. Kazakhstan today enjoys stable economic growth, essentially because of its export of energy resources. In order further to promote the country's economic and social development, the Government is actively developing important social, State-funded projects. To ensure their successful implementation, Kazakhstan

and countries of Asia and the Pacific need the expert consultative and technical assistance of the United Nations, its funds and programmes in order to consolidate our systemic and structural progress. We hope to see the active involvement of the entire United Nations system. We extend particular thanks to the United Nations Population Fund for its ongoing assistance to my country.

Mr. Chuquihuara (Peru) (*speak in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the Assembly on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1994 Cairo Conference. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development marked a fundamental turning point in population policies by making sexual and reproductive rights and health, the empowerment of women and gender equality the primary elements of development efforts, poverty reduction and the strengthening of democracy.

Peru committed itself in Cairo to working towards the implementation of those agreements, ensuring the development of individuals' capacities so that they might enjoy a healthy, productive life, free of violence, in a fair and balanced environment.

On this occasion, Peru reiterates its firm commitment to the Cairo principles, objectives and goals and to the agreements established in the key actions of 1999. Similarly, we emphasize the importance of the resolute implementation of the Programme of Action in the coming decade, which is indispensable if we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Peru has taken basic steps towards implementing the recommendations of the Conference. Progress has been made in the implementation of public population and development policies; in the recognition of reproductive rights; in meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of the population, including those of adolescents; in developing public policy on the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and in combating violence against women.

The Cairo Programme of Action is a reference point in the fight against poverty, in bridging the social divide and in the process of decentralization that already incorporates human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights; the full autonomy of women; the recognition of the multiplicity of ethnic, racial and cultural groups; and the recognition of the different

forms families can take. In that process, I want to emphasize the importance of the participation of civil society and the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations system to the implementation of the Cairo recommendations. We have worked and will continue to work together to make Cairo a reality. The excellent leadership of Executive Director Obaid will ensure that the goal will be met.

One of the major challenges to our country is the fight against poverty and the reduction of social inequalities — a central issue of development. In Peru, 54 per cent of the population lives in poverty and we have a high rate of maternal mortality, particularly among adolescent girls initiated into sexual life in a violent way or as a result of sexual abuse. Such children generally come from sectors that suffer the greatest exclusion. We are also redoubling our efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic and violence against women.

In that context, Peru participated actively this year in the regional processes to review the implementation of the Programme of Action that were held in Santiago, Chile, and in Puerto Rico on the occasion of the tenth anniversary. At both events, the Latin American and Caribbean region reaffirmed Cairo and the need to work together to implement its principles in the coming decade. We make special note of the outstanding work of Ms. Marisela Padron, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean division of UNFPA, in organizing and preparing for those events.

Peru recognizes that, while we have made progress in the implementation of the Programme, much remains to be done. In that regard, I appeal to the international donor community to ensure the implementation of the programme in the certainty that our countries attach equal importance to the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I wish to say that it has been an honour for my Government and for me personally to preside over the Commission on Population and Development this year, in which we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Cairo Conference. The Commission on Population and Development reaffirmed the principles and agreements of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions as representing an effective effort to

implement the Millennium Development Goals. We believe that we have contributed significantly to consolidating the work of the past 10 years and to ensuring the viability of concerted work for the decade to come.

Mr. Wang Guoqiang (China) (*speak in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We also wish to express our appreciation for the convening of this event commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The 1994 Cairo ICPD and its Programme of Action put forward such new concepts as all-round human-centred development and reproductive health and set the goal of sustainable development coordinated between population and economy, society, resources and environment, thus ushering in a new era of population and development programmes. In 2000, the Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Declaration, which established the Millennium Development Goals. The ICPD Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals are closely related to each other and mutually promoting. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, the Millennium Development Goals, especially the goal of eradicating poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed.

Proceeding from China's national realities, the Chinese Government over the past decade has earnestly honoured its commitments to the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. By adopting a decision-making strategy that integrates population and development, China has made distinct achievements in its population and development undertakings. Despite an economy that is still underdeveloped, China has effectively controlled excessive population growth, reduced its fertility rates to below the replacement rate, achieved an historical transformation of its population reproduction pattern, and vigorously enhanced its integrated national strength, social progress and the standard of living of

its people, thereby making a positive contribution to stabilizing the world's population.

To begin with, China has focused on economic development by accelerating the establishment and improvement of a socialist market economy, which has laid a solid material foundation for social progress and improved living standards.

Secondly, China has adhered to its fundamental national family planning policy and its sustainable development strategy, and properly balanced the relationship between socio-economic development and population, resources and the environment. The Chinese Government convenes symposiums on population, resources and the environment each year in order to undertake comprehensive research and the coordinated delegation of relevant work.

Thirdly, The Chinese Government has enthusiastically drawn upon advanced international philosophies and experiences and integrated them into the Chinese reform and implementation of population and family planning programmes. China has set up a benefit-orientated mechanism and a social security system that are conducive to its family planning cause. Over the past decade, the fertility rate for mothers and infant mortality have been on the decline and universal access to adolescent sexual and reproductive health education enhanced. The Government has provided the public with services and benefits through its family planning and reproductive health programmes, which in turn have led to increased public satisfaction with such services.

Fourthly, China has adhered to integrated decision-making and to ensuring coordinated progress in terms of population control, poverty alleviation and development. By 2003, China had already achieved the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty, ahead of the United Nations schedule.

Fifthly, the Chinese Government has placed education on its list of priorities for development. In 2000, China achieved, as scheduled, universal nine-year compulsory education and the elimination of illiteracy among people in their prime years.

Sixthly, China has boosted its international communication and cooperation in the field of population and development. In 1997, China joined the South-South Partners in Population and Development

and was elected Chair of the Partners in 2002, playing an active role in promoting intergovernmental cooperation among the Partners.

China has also carried out multiple cooperation projects with international organizations and non-governmental organizations in the fields of population, family planning and reproductive health. In particular, China has completed a five-stage country programme in family planning and reproductive health, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, which has played a very constructive role in promoting our population and family planning programme.

Despite the remarkable achievements of its population and family planning programmes, China is still encountering numerous difficulties and challenges on its path to the ultimate realization of the Cairo Programme of Action objectives and the Millennium Development Goals. Such problems as the coexistence of low fertility and large quantitative population growth, and the general backwardness of the population will remain constraints for China for some time to come. At the same time, China is increasingly frustrated by its structural population problems, the acceleration of population ageing and the unbalanced sex ratio at birth, which are still beyond effective control. Those problems exacerbate employment, re-employment and social security pressures; the conflict of interests between the ecology, the environment, natural resources and socio-economic development; the still arduous task of eradicating poverty and closing regional gaps; the further advancement of the status of women; and the protracted task of HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

Moreover, family planning and reproductive health services have failed to fully and effectively cover the underdeveloped regions, adolescents, the elderly and the migrant population. The coordinating mechanisms of the Government, the business community and non-governmental organizations need further integration with public resources.

Faced with all those challenges, the Chinese Government has set itself the goal of building a prosperous society on all fronts in the new millennium. To that end, the Chinese Government has adopted a scientific development strategy that features a comprehensive, integrated, human-centred and sustainable approach to development. The core of the concept is orientation towards all-round human

development, which will promote harmonious coexistence between man and nature and coordination between socio-economic development and population, resources and the environment.

The Chinese Government and the Partners recently held a successful international conference on population and development in Wuhan, China, adopting the Yangtze declaration. The declaration represents the voice of people in the South, who account for 54 per cent of the global population. With "Peace, Cooperation and Development" as its theme, the declaration embraces the spirit of sustainable human development, thereby winning the respect, commitment and support of all members of the Partners. The declaration has been distributed to delegations.

The declaration emphasizes that the population issue in developing countries remains a severe constraint on socio-economic development. The Partners call upon the international community to include population and reproductive health on important international agendas with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The declaration also appeals to developed countries for increased official development assistance to developing countries in the areas of family planning and reproductive health. It further calls on the developing countries to increase their investment and enhance their management capacity in population and development so as to fulfil their commitments under the Cairo Programme of Action and to promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

As a member of the Partners, China will continue to honour its obligations as Chair of the alliance and shall work relentlessly to further promote intergovernmental cooperation and communication among members of the Partners, facilitate South-North dialogue and cooperation, and implement the Cairo Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals and the Yangtze declaration.

While engaging in international affairs, the Chinese Government has always strongly felt that coexistence, sharing and "win-win" situations are the common objectives and ideals of humankind. Coexistence is a prerequisite for the continuous advancement of human society. Large or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, all countries should enjoy equal participation and sufficient decision-making power in

international affairs. Sharing is the means for mankind to achieve common prosperity.

So long as world peace remains indispensable to the stability of developing countries, there will be no global prosperity without the all-round development of developing countries. Developed countries have the responsibility and the obligation to assist the developing world. Efforts should be made to ensure that all countries and peoples enjoy equal development opportunities and share the prosperity brought about by global development in an equitable and rational manner.

The "win-win" scenario is the goal of human society for progress on all fronts. Only when each and every country in the world has fulfilled the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals will the twenty-first century truly become the century of development for all.

The Partners and the Chinese Government will continue to fulfil their commitment to the international community. We will uphold the banner of peace, harmony, cooperation and development, adhere to the path of peaceful development, and enhance and expand our communication and cooperation with all countries and regions of the world, in line with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, a results-oriented approach, long-term cooperation and common development. We will join the international community in its efforts to strive for the peace, prosperity and progress of mankind.

Ms. Benjamin (South Africa): First, allow me to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77.

My delegation is honoured to address this special commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). We express our appreciation to Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, for her leadership on population issues.

The International Conference on Population and Development was the first major international Conference in which South Africa participated following our democratic elections in April 1994, and we contributed to the formulation of the ICPD Programme of Action, which we endorsed. South Africa reaffirms its support for the ICPD Programme

of Action and the key actions for the further implementation of the ICPD. As a country, we continue to measure our progress of the past 10 years by how we implement the outcomes of the ICPD. In March 2004, we presented South Africa's report on the implementation of the Programme to the United Nations Commission on Population and Development and there are some copies available here today.

For us in Africa, the issues of population — such as women's reproductive rights and health, gender equality, equity and development, the care and protection of children and youth empowerment — remain extremely important. We come from a continent where underdevelopment remains a reality for millions of our people, particularly in rural areas, and the role of women and youth in poverty eradication is critical.

In preparation for our meetings in New York, South Africa participated in several meetings on population at which important declarations were adopted. In May 2004, our subregion organized the Southern African Ministers Conference on Population and Development in Maputo, Mozambique. In June 2004, we attended the African Ministers Conference on Population and Development held in Dakar, Senegal. And last week, the South African Government, in collaboration with the scientific community, hosted a national joint population conference, at which we recommitted ourselves to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

We gather here today in order to reflect on a decade during which poverty reduction, women's rights, reproductive health and sustainable development have received the attention of many of the leaders of the world and of nations. During that period, we adopted the Millennium Development Goals as a framework that integrates the objectives of many sectoral programmes of the United Nations. Nonetheless, we remain concerned that many developing countries, including a large number in Africa, may not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

We do recognize, however, the progress that was reported in this year's "State of the World Population Report". Particularly, we note the many legislative, policy and institutional reforms that resulted from the commitment of countries to the ICPD Programme of Action. It has also been reconfirmed that human rights remain fundamental to the achievement of sustainable

human development, together with the empowerment of women.

The South African Constitution guarantees human rights, entrenches gender equality, protects the reproductive freedom of couples, and promotes the social and economic development of our people. As a result, our population is becoming more educated; health care is becoming more accessible; more people live in formal houses and have access to electricity, clean water and sanitation; and a wider choice of contraceptives is more freely available. In 2001, our adult literacy rate was 89 per cent and we are working towards universal literacy amongst our youth. South African women are more literate and generally more educated than men. As a result of our investments in people, the total fertility rate is now estimated to be 2.77 children per woman in her reproductive years, down from a total fertility rate estimated at almost four a decade ago.

Despite the success we have had in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, we do acknowledge that many challenges remain and that even new ones have emerged in the past ten years. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has become one of the world's most daunting population and development challenges. In southern Africa, it has led to a decline in life expectancy and has taken the lives of young and productive adults. In connection with the pandemic, many of the countries in our region and continent are still struggling to reduce maternal, child and infant mortality and morbidity, in spite of large investments to improve mother and child health services. We are aware that we must redouble our efforts through comprehensive reproductive health services, the promotion of reproductive rights, gender equality and equity, and the empowerment of women. Extending those services to adolescents has become even more urgent. Nevertheless, we also know that we cannot experience any greater achievements without the support of the international community.

During the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development held earlier this year, a resolution was adopted highlighting the need for sufficient resources to address the implementation of the Programme of Action. An appeal was made for additional resources to developing countries so as to ensure the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. We hope that the 10-year review of ICPD will present an opportunity for the

donors to live up to their pledges. In that regard, my delegation commends the European Union for its decision to fill the entire reproductive health commodities gap of \$75 million for 2004, as announced this morning.

As I indicated at the beginning of my statement, South Africa is celebrating 10 years of democracy that coincide with our involvement in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. We are consciously aware that we must pursue population and development objectives through the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, including the African Union and the Southern African Development Community. The issues of population and development require a global response. We are determined to intensify our collaboration with our partners in addressing the challenges we face. Those challenges can be met only if all the people who live on our beautiful planet have a share in them.

Ms. El-Baz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on this important occasion, to which we have come from throughout the world, East and West, South and North, to celebrate together and to assess, individually and collectively, our achievements 10 years after the International Conference on Population and Development, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your important post.

I also congratulate the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the statement she made this morning.

While every delegation at this important event has the right to speak about its national experience, the delegation of Egypt has more than one reason to be grateful and proud to participate in today's commemoration. Our first reason is the fact that, in 1994, Egypt hosted the historic International Conference on Population and Development, with all the participating personalities and experiences that were mobilized for its new ideas, plans and beneficial programmes. Our second reason is that Egypt's implementation of the outcome of the Conference and its approach to its population and development problems in general have been exemplary experiences.

The 1994 Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action introduced a qualitative shift in the way issues of population and development are tackled. The concept of human development was introduced where once such issues were discussed solely on the basis

conventional demographic indicators. Perhaps the most important result of the Cairo Conference 10 years ago has been the integration of the concepts of liberation, empowerment and maximum employment for human capabilities as pivotal axes for progress in the field of population and development.

Egypt has been implementing the Programme of Action and has committed itself to carrying out population programmes and policies for human development, taking into consideration the specificity and social and cultural circumstances of Egyptian society. In conformity with the Cairo Programme of Action, we promote full respect for all moral and religious values, in accordance with internationally recognized human rights.

Of course, challenges and requirements remain in the full implementation of the Programme of Action, but we have registered much progress and improvements in some indicators, such as a reduction in fertility and in child and maternal mortality, and increased resort to family planning. Moreover, comprehensive reproductive health care has been integrated into primary health-care units and great attention to quality care has been given to health care for adults and the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors. We have programmes to eradicate illiteracy and a plan to lower the school drop-out rate, especially for girls. The year 2003 was declared the Year of the Egyptian Girl, and an initiative for educating girls in rural and poor urban areas has been launched. Furthermore, Egypt's population strategy has sought to close the qualitative educational gap between boys and girls and many measures and decisions have been taken to prevent the circumcision of girls in order to protect them from forms of violence and indignity.

Egypt also established a higher national women's council in 2000 for the advancement of women. Among its achievement are its support for women heads of households and training them to manage small enterprises, its promotion of women's participation in politics, its amendment of the citizenship law in order to give citizenship to the children of Egyptian mothers in mixed marriages, the establishment of specialized family courts, and making women eligible to become judges.

Despite all those achievements and successes in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, many challenges and difficulties remain that require

bold treatment and technical assistance. Those challenges include the economic and financial constraints on the expansion of family planning and reproductive health care, the improvement of education, women's employment and health care for mothers, infants, the elderly and the disabled. Despite the contributions of several national, regional and international organizations and donor agencies, and increased contributions from the private and business sectors, we still need a great deal of financial resources and technical assistance. Moreover, the conservative cultural environment in certain regions of the country has hindered the necessary expansion of some programmes, especially those related to family planning and the empowerment of women, work, and issues related to reproductive health and rights. The administrative environment and institutional capacities will also play a role in achieving the required progress.

We have noted the importance of coordination among institutions, especially those working in human resource development, population planning, and data collection and analysis. On the other hand, we have also noted the need to keep the legislative councils, civil society and youth involved.

I have offered a few highlights of the Egyptian experience in human development and population. It is the outcome of the efforts of national institutions, together with the active help and continuous efforts of the UNFPA office in Cairo. We are confident that such cooperation will continue and that we will be able to implement the Programme of Action and to integrate its elements with those of the Millennium Development Goals.

In that respect, Egypt attaches great importance to the review event to be held in September 2005 and looks forward to contributing to the follow-up to the Cairo Conference so that we can achieve our common objectives. There can be no doubt that those objectives coincide with the policies of our country in its general development plans and population programmes. We are hopeful that our meeting 10 years from now will crown two decades of ongoing work in the service of population, which primarily is in the interests of the individual, society and humankind as a whole.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.