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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION - 1984
New York, 23-27 January, 1984
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE: GENERAL PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

General preparations for the International Conference
on Population, 1984

Progress report of the Secretary-General

* E/CONF.76/PC/1.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1979/32 of 9 May 1979, requested the Population Commission, at its twenty-first session, to consider, and advise the Council on, the possibility of holding an international conference to review population developments in the first decade following the World Population Conference, with the aim of contributing to the process of quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action and to the further implementation of the Plan of Action. The Commission, at its twenty-first session, constituted a working group of the whole to discuss this possibility and to report to the Commission on its deliberations. Considering the increasing complexity of population matters and their urgency, as well as the need to strengthen the work already done and the need to identify new courses of action for the future, the working group concluded that the Commission should recommend to the Council the convening of an intergovernmental conference on population to be held in 1984.
2. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1981/87 of 25 November 1981, decided to convene in 1984, under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on Population, and decided that the Conference should be devoted to the discussion of selected issues of the highest priority, giving full recognition to the relationships between population and social and economic development with the aim of contributing to the process of review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action and to its further implementation. In the same resolution, the Council decided to designate the Population Commission, meeting in open-ended session, with the participation of any other Staff, as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.
3. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1983/6 of 26 May 1983, decided to convene the International Conference on Population at Mexico City from 6 to 13 August 1984, and requested the Secretary-General to convene pre-conference consultations on organizational matters on 5 August 1984 and to provide for the possible extension of the Conference for one day, if required. During the visits to Mexico of the planning missions for the Conference in October 1982 and June 1983, it was agreed that the Conference would take place at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Mexico City.
4. In pursuance of the decision of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1983/6 that the Conference should be composed of a plenary and one main committee, it is proposed that, during the first five days of the Conference (6-10 August), plenary meetings would specifically focus on the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action, while at the same time the main Committee, serving as a committee of the whole of the Conference, would consider the proposed recommendations for the further implementation of the Plan of Action. The week-end that will follow would provide time for the reproduction of the draft report of the Conference in the official languages of the Conference. The following Monday (13 August) would be devoted to meetings of the plenary (with the understanding that the Conference may be extended to Tuesday, 14 August, if required), to which the report of the Conference will be submitted for consideration and adoption.
5. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is responsible for the co-ordination of the substantive aspects

of the preparations for the Conference, including the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action. Secretariat support for the Conference has also been provided by various other units of the United Nations, according to their areas of competence and responsibility, under the guidance of the Secretary-General of the Conference.

II. STEERING COMMITTEE

6. The General Assembly in its resolution 37/14 B of 16 November 1982 (annex, para. 14), provides for the setting up of a steering committee in the case of United Nations conferences dealing with economic and social matters. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation has, under his chairmanship, constituted a Steering Committee for the International Conference on Population, 1984 to provide overall guidance, and orientation and co-ordination of the input from the relevant secretariats of the United Nations system. The Steering Committee has concentrated on major policy issues affecting the substantive direction of the preparatory activities for the Conference, in particular by ensuring the conformity of the preparatory work with the overall strategies and priorities established by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the substantive co-ordination of such work with related activities undertaken within the United Nations system of organizations. This Committee, composed of senior representatives of concerned departments and units, met on 31 March 1982, 21 January 1983 and 19 October 1983 to review preparatory activities for the Conference. The Committee will meet again in early 1984, after the meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

III. AD HOC TASK FORCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION

7. The Ad Hoc Task Force of the International Conference on Population of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), established to assist in the provision of substantive inter-agency input to the Conference and to co-ordinate the participation of the regional commissions and the specialized agencies, met at Geneva in May 1982 and September 1983. During the September meeting, Task Force members conducted an extensive review of the initial drafts of the two Conference documents, providing specific information on the programmes and policies of the commissions and agencies as well as general comments.

8. The Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme Matters) (CCSQ) at its second regular session of 1983, discussed the report of the Task Force on its September meeting. The members of CCSQ agreed that a further meeting of the Task Force should be held in January 1984, immediately after the meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

IV. INVITATIONS TO THE CONFERENCE

9. In accordance with the Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/6, the Secretary-General will invite all States to participate in the Conference; representatives of organizations that have received a standing invitation from the

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General Assembly to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices in the capacity of observers to participate in the Conference in that capacity; representatives of the national liberation movements recognized in its region by the Organization of African Unity to participate in the Conference in the capacity of observers; the United Nations Council for Namibia to participate in the Conference, in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 32/9 E of 4 November 1977; the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as other interested organs of the United Nations, to be represented at the Conference; interested intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers at the Conference; interested non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to be represented by observers at the Conference; and other interested non-governmental organizations that may have a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference to be represented by observers at the Conference.

V. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

10. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1982/42 of 27 July 1982, invited the regional commissions to consider, at their annual sessions in 1984, the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, with a view to formulating suggestions and recommendations for the further implementation of the World Population Plan of Action at the regional level, and to transmit those suggestions and recommendations to the Conference for its consideration. All regional commissions will convene their annual sessions in the spring of 1984, which will permit the consideration of the report of the Preparatory Committee. It has been determined that the Population Committee of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), at its plenary session to be held at Lima in March 1984, will consider the documents emanating from the Preparatory Committee.

11. In terms of regional activities that would facilitate the formulation of the recommendations at the regional level, it may be noted that the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), took place at Colombo in October 1982; the Committee on Population of ESCAP, at its meeting in August 1983, recommended to ESCAP that the major contribution of the region to the International Conference on Population should be the Asia-Pacific Call for Action on Population and Development, 1/ adopted unanimously by the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference. The Regional Population Meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was convened in Bulgaria in October 1983 and its recommendations are to be considered at the forthcoming session of ECE. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) will convene the Second African Conference on Population in the United Republic of Tanzania in January 1984; and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) plans to hold its Third Regional Population Conference in Jordan in early 1984. It is anticipated that these meetings will serve, as did the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, as excellent vehicles to focus attention on Conference-related issues in each region.

VI. PREPARATIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

12. The Secretary-General of the Conference visited a large number of countries to discuss with the Governments the plans and preparations for the Conference. In addition, the Secretary-General of the Conference wrote to Member States in April 1983, informing them of the Conference preparations and inviting them to consider the organization of national committees for the co-ordination of Conference preparations at the national level. A number of countries have designated national units to undertake preparations for the Conference and others are in the process of establishing such units.

13. In a further letter to Member States in November 1983 informing them of additional preparations, the Secretary-General of the Conference described the objective of the national preparatory committees as that of heightening awareness of the importance of population issues in the context of the Conference. These committees, which may include representatives of various ministries and departments concerned with the Conference themes, as well as representatives of the academic and non-governmental communities where appropriate, could organize seminars and conferences on the four substantive issues of the Conference preparations and on issues appropriate to the region.

VII. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

14. The Secretary-General of the Conference held extensive consultations with major population-related non-governmental organizations in order to ensure their contribution to the Conference preparations. The governing body of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO) has established a planning committee to plan and co-ordinate CONGO activities in support of the Conference.

15. The planning committee, after extensive discussions with non-governmental organizations based in New York and at Geneva, organized an International Consultation at Geneva from 13 to 15 September 1983. Representatives of 62 international and 30 national organizations attended this Consultation. The report of the Consultation focuses on the role of non-governmental organizations in furthering the goals and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action and in contributing to renewed interest in this area on the part of Governments. The Consultation was scheduled well in advance of the Conference in order to ensure that the viewpoints of non-governmental organizations were adequately reflected in the draft documents submitted to the Preparatory Committee, and to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations in preparatory activities, at both the regional and national levels.

16. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1983/6, requested the Secretary-General to invite interested non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to be represented by observers at the Conference, and other interested non-governmental organizations that may have a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference to be represented by observers at the Conference.

VIII. PUBLIC INFORMATION

17. Public information activities in preparation for the Conference include a Conference brochure and a Conference poster. The brochure and poster have been sent to all Member States, to field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), as well as to United Nations information centres. Four briefing papers are being prepared on the four topics of the expert group meetings. Written by journalists experienced in fields related to population, these papers will be available by early 1984. The target audience for these briefing papers consists primarily of non-governmental organizations and the media. They will also be made available to policy-makers, government planners, researchers and academic institutions.

18. A short film is being produced by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the Information and External Relations Division of UNFPA. This film will focus on developments in the field of population since 1974 and will be available by early 1984. Copies of this film, as well as of video cassettes, will be available for loan through United Nations information centres and UNDP offices. A photo exhibit is also being planned by the Department of Public Information. This exhibit, with the theme "World Population Perspectives", will consist of panels of photographs with short descriptions.

19. The media encounter, which is to be held at Mexico City on 3 and 4 August 1984, will be open to all journalists, with a selected number of journalists from developing countries being provided with travel support. With the background provided during these two days of panels, these journalists will be well prepared to cover the variety of population issues to be discussed at the Conference.

20. A background paper on the Conference was part of the documentation for the annual meeting of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, held at Geneva from 19 to 22 April 1983. A number of offers of collaboration were extended by agency representatives at this meeting and expanded on at the September meeting of the ACC Task Force. It is anticipated that collaborative work will continue with the regional commissions and the agencies to ensure a broad-based public information programme.

21. The Department of Public Information also plans to pay special attention to the Conference in its regular publications, in particular Development Forum and the UN Chronicle. In addition, the radio programmes of the Department will focus on the Conference in the months preceding it, as will the television programme "World Chronicle".

IX. FINANCES

22. The total amount of pledges as of 1 November 1983 made by 22 Governments (including 15 Governments of developing countries) is \$1,045,400. The pledges are as follows: Australia, \$100,000; Canada, \$81,300; China, \$25,000; Colombia, \$44,000; Cuba, \$25,000; Cyprus, \$200; Ecuador, \$25,000; Egypt, \$25,000; France, \$69,900; India, \$35,000; Indonesia, \$25,000; Italy \$100,000; Japan, \$250,000; Malawi, \$5,000; the Netherlands, \$100,000; Pakistan, \$10,000;

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Peru, \$25,000; the Philippines, \$25,000; the Sudan, \$15,000; the Syrian Arab Republic, \$25,000; Thailand, \$10,000; and Yemen, \$25,000. In addition, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, through the Development Policy Forum of the German Foundation of International Development, provided \$45,760 to cover a substantial part of the costs of the Expert Group Meeting on Population, Resources, Environment and Development. It is expected that there will be no difficulty in meeting the extrabudgetary fund-raising target, set at \$1,481,300. The balance of the funds required for the Conference from regular budgetary resources is estimated at \$796,900.

23. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/6, a request will be submitted to the General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session, to approve the regular budgetary resources required.

X. REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

24. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1981/87, requested the Conference to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, through the Council.

Notes

1/ See E/ESCAP/301.
