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INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

MEXICO CITY

AUGUST 15 - 16, 1984

Summary of Major Demographic,
Social and Economic Trends

Prepared by the Secretariat of the Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, based on the "Review and Appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action: Report of the Secretary-General," Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population, 1984 (United Nations E/CONF. 76/PC/10.)

ANTECEDENTS

Beginning in 1974, with the World Population Conference in Bucharest, a series of international and regional meetings have been held to discuss appropriate plans of action to deal with the problems of population and development. Over the last decade these international meetings, including meetings of Parliamentarians, have helped to change the climate of world opinion with respect to population issues, providing support and encouragement for the expanding population programmes of Governments, international agencies and non-Governmental organisations.

The Bucharest Conference

In 1970 the Economic and Social Council accepted the recommendation of the UN Population Commission to convene in 1974 a World Population Conference to consider "basic demographic problems, their relationship with economic and social development, and population policies and action programmes needed to promote human welfare and development." This Conference took place in Bucharest in August of 1974. It was attended by 136 States as well by various United Nations bodies and non-Governmental organisations. Upon the completion of the work of the Conference, a World Population Plan of Action was adopted by consensus.

The Plan of Action adopted at Bucharest, after considerable debate, recognised that "population and development are inter-related: population variables influence development variables and are also influenced by them." The plan also affirmed the sovereign right of each country to establish population policies in keeping with its own development goals and the human right of all individuals and couples "to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so."

In 1979, five years after the World Population Conference, the first review and appraisal of the Plan was carried out by the UN Population Commission and submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council. In endorsing the report, the Council requested the Population Commission to consider the possibility of holding an international conference in 1984 with the aim of contributing to the next five-year review of the Plan of Action and to its further implementation. This recommendation resulted in the decision in 1981 to hold a second International Conference on Population in Mexico City in August 1984. The Conference is to consider population issues of the highest priority for the future implementation of the World Population Plan of Action.

It is perhaps significant that while the impetus for the Bucharest Conference 10 years ago came primarily from a few developed country donors, pressure for a second international population conference in 1984 came principally from developing countries, many of which have made voluntary contributions to the conference budget. This turnabout is symbolic of the fact that over the last decade developing country concerns over population issues have grown significantly and developing countries in many respects now represent the leading edge of world population efforts.

Adoption of National Population Policies

One indication of the growing concern over population trends is the fact that 39 countries now have national policies and active programmes to slow population growth. About 78 percent of the population of developing nations live in such countries. An additional 33 developing countries and nearly all developed countries provide family planning services as a part of Government-supported health services. In most of the remaining countries some form of family planning service is available through the non-Governmental sector. Trends in national policy indicate that countries increasing consider population change a legitimate subject of direct Governmental intervention and that the level of controversy and confrontation which prevailed 10 years ago has declined.

At the same time, countries have tended to broaden the range of their concerns in the area of population policy to include not simply the issue of population growth but also the age structure of the population (numbers of children or aged), mortality levels, and population migration, both internal and international. For many developing countries the single most important population issue today is rural to urban migration and the resulting unprecedented growth of metropolitan areas. For many developed countries, the aging of the population and the increase in unauthorized immigration are major concerns. The fair treatment of migrant workers is concern for both sending and receiving countries.

Over the last decade there have also been important changes in the financing of population activities. Although contributions by donor countries to international and bilateral population assistance programmes have increased substantially, the more significant trend has been the increase in national expenditures on family planning by the developing countries. Whereas a decade ago developing country programs were heavily dependent on external assistance, many such programmes are now largely financed from internal sources.

At the Bucharest Conference, there was considerable debate over what measures--development measures or direct population interventions--would have the greatest effect in lowering fertility. Although some of this debate continues at the political level, it is now widely recognised that population and development programmes must be pursued simultaneously and that they are mutually supportive.

A review of 10 years of experience demonstrates that those countries which were the most successful in their population programmes combined strong Government commitment to population activities and the availability of internal and external resources with an economic and social climate which favoured changes in public attitudes with regard to contraception and family size. Programmes were additionally successful if they made substantial use of community networks and of local people for the delivery of services. Experience has also made it clear that, although development measures such as education, health services and improvements in the status of women are important in their own right and may indirectly influence family size ideals, in terms of the impact on fertility, direct measures such as information, education and family planning services are by far the most cost-effective measures and are themselves an important instrument of development.

Development of an International Consensus

Since the adoption of the World Population Plan of Action, many of the principles espoused by the plan have been given a prominent place in the discussions and declarations of inter-Governmental conferences dealing with related development issues. These include: the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade; the World Food Conference; the International Women's Conferences in Mexico and Copenhagen; the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Cooperation; the Conference on Human Settlements; the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress; the Declaration of Alma-Ata on primary health care; the World Conference on Agrarian Reform; the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development; the New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries; the International Conference on Family Planning for the 1980's and finally; the World Assembly on Aging.

Population and related development issues have also been the subject of regional United Nations meetings for Asia, Latin America and Africa. The Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka in September 1982, under sponsorship of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission, adopted an important programme of recommendations for further action.

In recent years, a major interest in population and development has also emerged on the part of Parliamentarians. The first International Conference of Parliamentarians was held in 1979 in Colombo, followed by one or more regional meetings of Parliamentarians in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere and by national meetings in a number of countries. The emergence of an international movement of Parliamentarians has done much to further the development of an international consensus on population issues and has provided new impetus to Government action.

MAJOR DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS OF THE LAST DECADE

In the intervening decade between the World Population Conference in Bucharest and the International Conference on Population scheduled to take place in Mexico City this year, substantial progress has been made by Governments in the adoption of population policies and the implementation of programmes. Support for population policies and family planning programmes has also expanded at the grassroots level. The result is that many countries have made considerable progress in reducing birth rates, exceeding in some respects the rate of progress anticipated in the World Population Plan of Action. Unfortunately, progress has not been sufficient or widespread enough to lower population growth rates significantly in the majority of developing countries. At the same time other population trends have intensified, including the trend toward rapid urbanisation and increases in international population movements.

In other areas of social and economic development progress has also been made, but the goals set out by the Population Plan of Action and by other international documents have not been achieved. There is evidence, moreover, that continued high rates of population growth in many developing countries have made the achievement of these goals more difficult. Of particular concern has been the slowing of rates of economic growth.

Trends in Population Growth

Between 1974 and 1984, the world population has grown from 4 billion to 4.8 billion, an increase of about one fifth. In absolute numbers the increase is equivalent to the combined populations of the Soviet Union, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and France. Of this increase, 90 percent occurred in the less developed regions of the world.

During the same period, however, the rate of world population growth declined from 2.0 percent to 1.7 percent. Declines occurred in both developed and developing countries, but the changes were very uneven, with little or no decline in the majority of developing countries. Among the latter group, the most significant single decline occurred in China (from 2.4 percent to 1.2 percent.) If China is excluded from the calculations, the decline in the population growth rate of developing countries is slight: from 2.5 to 2.4 percent. Population growth rates have actually increased in a number of developing countries, including some regional rates in Western Asia and nearly all of those in sub-Saharan Africa, where the population growth rate has increased from 2.7 percent to 3 percent.

These trends are explained by the fact that, although birth rates declined significantly in many developing countries, fertility declines were offset by corresponding declines in mortality. If current efforts to lower birth rates continue, the rate of increase of world population could be reduced to about 1.5 percent by the end of the century. However, if efforts to reduce fertility further do not succeed, the rate of growth could remain above 1.7 percent through the remainder of the century.

Annual increments added to the world population have not declined and are expected to increase. In 1974 world population was increasing by 79 million a year. Today it is increasing by 82 million a year and is projected to be increasing by about 89 million a year between 1995-2000. This results from the increasingly large number of couples who will be reaching reproductive age in the coming decades, almost all of whom have already been born. In the 16 years from 1984 to 2000, world population is expected to increase by 1.3 billion, from 4.8 to 6.1 billion, an increment greater than the combined present populations of Africa and Latin America. Of this increase, 56 percent will occur in Asia, 25 percent in Africa and 11 percent in Latin America.

The momentum of population growth thus remains an extremely powerful force and, while rates of growth have declined as a result of organised family planning programmes and socio-economic development, actual numbers added annually remain high and are increasing. In some regions there has been very little change, and growth rates may rise in the future. Further intensified actions are thus clearly required to achieve a substantial moderation of population growth in most countries.

Trends in Age Structure and Population Distribution

Between 1974 and 1984, the age structure of populations in both developed and developing countries changed significantly. In a number of developed countries low or negative rates of population growth produced an aging of the population, raising concerns over the ability of these countries to finance retirement, health and other welfare programmes mandated for the elderly. In most developing countries high rates of population growth further aggravated

unfavourable ratios of children to adults. In 1975 in the developing countries there were approximately 1,216 million children under age 15. By 1984 this number had grown to 1,337 and will reach 1,610 million by the year 2000. In developing countries children under five years of age represent over 13 percent of the population, but only 7.5 percent in developed countries. A high proportion of children or of elderly in a population creates an unfavourable dependency ratio, which may in turn have consequences for social and economic development.

In the last decade there have also been important changes in the geographic distribution of populations as a result of internal and international migration. Of greatest significance is the fact that the urban population of the world has increased by 29 percent, from 1.52 billion to 1.97 billion. The urban population of some areas, such as East Africa, has doubled. It should be noted that high rates of urban growth are the result not only of heavy rural to urban migration, but also of high urban birth rates. In most developing countries urban births account for about 60 percent of urban growth. In 1950 only 11 cities in the world had populations of more than 4 million; three of these cities were in developing countries. By 1980 the number of such cities had risen to 38 and if present trends continue there will be almost 80 such cities by the end of the century, 59 of which will be in the developing regions. The continued growth in needed expenditures for urban infrastructure and the increase in urban unemployment, especially among youth, have become major concerns for most developing country Governments. Efforts to influence internal migration patterns, however, have met with very mixed success.

Although data on international migration are not readily available, there is considerable evidence that patterns of international migration have changed in the last ten years and that these trends are of concern to countries in both the developed and developing regions. There has, for example, been a virtual stoppage in the recruitment of foreign workers by the industrialised market economies of Europe, and the expatriate populations in those countries have tended to decline. In contrast, the oil-exporting countries of Western Asia have continued to admit sizeable numbers of foreign workers, at least up to 1980 and the number of countries sending migrants to West Asia has expanded greatly. In these countries foreign workers often constitute a large proportion of the local labour force. Partly for this reason, these countries, like certain European countries, are now moving toward measures that regulate immigration and labour recruitment more strictly. The restrictions in traditional and newer migrant-receiving countries are partly responsible for a rise in illegal or undocumented migration. The major cause of such migration remains the disparity in economic opportunity among countries.

The importance of refugee movements has increased considerably in the past decade. While in 1974 there were an estimated 1.8 million refugees in the world, by the end of 1981 this number had risen to nearly 6.8 million. (Both estimates exclude the Palestinian refugees and the 2 million refugees who have been permanently resettled in third asylum countries.) In Africa alone, the number of refugees has increased from one million to nearly three million. The care and resettlement of refugees will remain one of the greatest and most difficult population problems over the next decade, requiring much improved international cooperation.

Trends in Economic Development

The World Population Plan of Action, like other international declarations adopted over the last decade, recognises explicitly the important inter-relationships between population trends and socio-economic transformation. Consequently, the Plan of Action made a number of recommendations with respect to economic and social measures presumed to influence fertility. In the intervening years, however, two significant patterns have emerged. First, there is evidence that, in terms of its effect on fertility, economic growth is less important than some other dimensions of development, such as education or improvements in the status of women. There are numerous examples of developing countries, and regions within countries, which have experienced substantial reductions in rates of fertility and mortality in spite of very low rates of economic growth. Second, population growth itself appears to have hampered improvements in both per capita income and in those qualitative social measures thought to influence fertility.

During the 1960s, Gross Domestic Product in developing country market economies grew at a relatively robust rate of 6 percent annually. However, because population also grew, at approximately 2.7 percent per year, per capita GDP increased by only 3.3 percent. During the decade of the 1970s, this situation worsened. GDP grew by only 5.2 percent and per capita GDP by only 2.6 percent. In the low-income petroleum importing countries, per capita GDP grew hardly at all and in some cases declined. Given the economic recession of the early 1980s, it will be exceedingly difficult for this latter group of countries to reach the 4.6 percent annual growth in per capita GDP called for in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

Trends in Savings, Investment and Indebtedness

Of the many factors contributing to slower rates of economic growth over the last decade, two are of special significance for developing countries with high population growth rates. These are: (a) the inadequacy of national efforts to generate internal savings required to finance domestic development; and (b) the deteriorating balance of payments situation leading to shortages of foreign exchange. During the 1960s, total savings in developing market economies grew at an 8.8 percent rate. This rate fell to 5.2 percent during the 1970s. Although by 1980 developing countries were sustaining a high rate of gross investment (27 percent of GDP), this level of investment was made possible only by increased borrowing from abroad, with the result that international indebtedness of developing countries has now reached approximately 700 billion dollars.

Between 1970 and 1980, the developing market economies also saw their share of world exports decline from 23.5 percent to 20.4 percent, while their share of world imports increased from 16.2 percent to almost 21 percent. In part, these trends reflect the fact that some developing countries that were once exporters of foodstuffs now must meet the nutritional needs of much larger populations through food imports.

Although the ability of countries to generate internal savings and to improve their terms of trade is related to many factors, one of them may be the rate of population growth. High rates of population growth and large families

create an unfavourable dependency ratio at both the aggregate and household levels, reducing the amount of income which can be set aside from current consumption to finance investment. This is likely to be the case even in countries where cultural traditions, income levels, and Government fiscal policies encourage saving. Although the role of demographic factors in savings and investment is still a matter of controversy, it is perhaps significant that, over the last decade, all countries with moderate to low rates of population growth achieved good rates of capital formation, while the performance of countries with high population growth rates has been mixed.

Trends in Employment

Expanding employment is an important social as well as economic goal, and combatting unemployment and underemployment is essential for the elimination of poverty. But the achievement of full employment presents a formidable challenge, especially for those countries experiencing rapid labour force growth. Between now and the year 2000, developing countries will need to find employment for 700 million new entrants into the labour force, a number almost equal to the combined labour force of the industrialized countries. In nearly every developing country, new job requirements will grow at staggering rates, at least until the year 2000 and probably until 2025. Many observers believe that it is beyond the abilities of most countries, even with accelerated investment, to provide employment to more than 70 percent of the labour force over the next several decades.

Moreover, as the labour force in developing countries has expanded, most new workers have typically been absorbed into agricultural and informal commercial sectors characterised by high underemployment. These trends have tended over the last decade to perpetuate low productivity and low wages.

Levels of employment and unemployment are determined in the long run by a combination of factors, including demographic trends, patterns of technological change, labour force participation rates and social or political features specific to countries. Over the next 15 years fertility patterns will not, moreover, greatly influence labour force growth, since most new entrants have already been born. Over the longer term, however, population policies adopted now may make it easier for countries to balance labour force expansion with the creation of new economic opportunities.

Trends in Food Production

Globally, the growth of food production during the 1960s and 1970s more than kept pace with population increases and is projected to do so in the future. The problem of adequate food supplies lies less with the overall growth of food production than with its distribution and the lack of purchasing power among the low-income group who are nutritionally at risk. Even though per capita food production has increased in the developing countries as a whole, in many poor countries population continues to grow more rapidly than food production, and some developing countries actually registered declines in per capita production in the last decade. In Africa, for example, the rate of growth in agricultural production fell to 1.7 percent during the 1970s, while the rate of population growth increased to 2.9 percent, a situation which has

created food deficits of massive proportions. On a global basis, cereal import requirements for developing countries, now estimated at 105 million tons, may grow to 250 million tons by the end of the century.

For some developing countries, particularly those of south Asia, arable land expansion will not suffice in the future to achieve the required increase in food production, and increased yields through greater and more efficient use of agricultural inputs will become essential. In certain other regions, the expansion of arable land may entail serious ecological risks. For all countries, all potentially arable land is expected to be under cultivation in the next two to three decades. Meeting the goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition will thus require changes in both agricultural and demographic trends, combined with improvements in the distribution of income and resources.

Trends in Education and Health

In the developing countries, between 1960 and 1980, the gross enrolment of children in primary schools increased by 139 percent and the percentage of children enrolled increased from 60 percent to 86 percent. In absolute numbers, however, the struggle against illiteracy has lagged behind population growth. Between 1970 and 1980, for the world as a whole, the number of illiterates increased from 760 million to 825 million. Since education, particularly education for girls, is assumed to have a strong impact on birth rates, it is of particular concern that lower enrolment rates and high drop-out rates for girls have persisted. It is estimated that 80 percent of the world's illiterates are women. Future rates of population growth will affect the level of effort which developing countries will have to make to expand educational opportunities.

Like education, health is one of the most important measures of social development and individual well-being. Improvements in health, particularly in child survival rates, are also considered to have important indirect effects on fertility patterns. In the last decade substantial progress has been made in maternal care and in the immunisation of young children. Equally important has been the commitment on the part of developing countries and donor agencies to primary health care services which promote community involvement in the health care process.

Despite this progress, achievements in health have fallen short of the targets set by the World Population Plan of Action for increased life expectancy and reduced infant mortality. There are indications that the rate of mortality decline has slowed. There is also disturbing evidence that in a few countries that female mortality, especially infant mortality, is higher than male mortality -- an indication of possible discrimination in health care and nutrition.

Moreover, in 1980 more than half the population of the developing countries still lacked access to safe water and sanitary facilities, factors which contribute greatly to high levels of mortality and morbidity. Improvements in environmental health and access to basic health services are fully possible if sufficient resources are made available. The level of resources required over the next several decades will, of course, be determined in part by rates of population growth.

Environmental and Resource Trends

The World Population Plan of Action called on all countries to "adapt themselves to more rational utilisation of natural resources, without excess, so that some are not deprived of what others waste." This recommendation reflected a concern that world resources, particularly energy resources, were being consumed too rapidly and that the fault lay in over-consumption by the developed countries. During the years since the Bucharest Conference, overall use of resources by the developed countries has moderated, owing to the global economic slow-down, in combination with increasing prices and conservation measures. But international equity with regard to per capita use of energy and other resources has not improved significantly. The developing countries, which comprise about three fourths of the world population, consumed 10.1 percent of energy resources in 1970, and this share had increased to only 12.8 percent by 1980.

From a global point of view, the supply of mineral resources (excluding energy resources) does not now pose a problem of absolute scarcity, and even conventional energy resources appear sufficient to meet development requirements up until the year 2000. Moreover, stocks of non-renewable resources can be augmented through discovery of new deposits and improvements in technology for extraction. Their rates of exhaustion can be reduced through conservation, recycling and substitution, as demonstrated by recent experience. However, it should be recognised that supplies of such resources are finite and that for some of them, readily available, less expensive supplies have already been consumed.

While trends over the last decade have been somewhat reassuring with respect to mineral resources, prospects have become less bright with respect to land and water resources. In some countries, expanding human and animal populations have already led to the degradation of the land resource base needed to support future food production. The task of meeting increased food requirements in many countries involves further environmental risks. The apparent availability of large unused land areas is misleading. Nearly all arable land in most Asian countries is now under cultivation. In Latin America, two thirds of projected land expansion would take place in areas where the ecological risks are high.

The clearing of forests for farm land and excessive fuelwood collection have resulted in the disappearance of tropical forests at an unprecedented rate. Unfortunately, in many cases the temporary gains in cultivatable land have been offset by rapid declines in soil fertility and negative effects on water retention. Desertification continued on a broad scale during the last 10 years and some 6 million hectares were lost or impaired annually as a result of severe drought combined with overexploitation.

Since 1974, it has become increasingly apparent that an understanding of environmental factors and their relationship to population trends on the one hand and the future productivity of natural resources on the other hand is essential to the formulation of long-term strategies for development.

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

MEXICO CITY

AUGUST 15 - 16, 1984

Executive Summaries of Recommendations
of United Nations Expert Groups

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON MORTALITY AND HEALTH POLICY

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1981/87 the Expert Group on Mortality and Health Policy was convened in Rome from 30 May to 3 June 1983 to examine high priority issues affecting mortality and health and their relationship and consequences to development. The Group's findings and recommendations will be presented to the International Conference on Population in August 1984 for consideration in the review and appraisal of the World Population of Action.

Interactions Between Health, Mortality and Development

(1) Improving health and reducing mortality are a central goal of development not only in terms of public wellbeing but also to facilitate other aspects of development, through improvement of labor quality, for example. Reducing mortality also is likely to moderate fertility, thus speeding the demographic transition. For these reasons, efforts to achieve more rapid improvements in health and declines in mortality should be greatly intensified. In particular, governments are urged to direct resources towards upgrading conditions of the most vulnerable or poorest groups in their countries. The cooperation of a wide range of international organizations (not just those traditionally involved) is required. Along with national governments they should accord highest priority to fostering improved international relations so allowing reallocation of funds from the military to the social-economic sphere. Furthermore, negative consequences of development - changes in lifestyle, environmental deterioration and hazardous industrial working conditions - need be anticipated, monitored and counteracted.

(2) Health programs are more likely to be successfully implemented if considered in the context of other development programs. The promotion of health should be the explicit concern of all government and development agencies, and their actions should be coordinated. Programs should be oriented increasingly towards the development of "human resources." Commitment is likely to be enhanced when health providers are part of the same group as those being served and when there is grassroots involvement in program planning and implementation.

Five Themes

Five themes to be considered when establishing health policies in developing countries are: (1) Necessary data (such as what economic and cultural patterns underlie mortality structure and how they affect the acceptability of interventions). The need ranges from small anthropological studies to a worldwide clearinghouse and program to study mortality and morbidity. Evaluation resources and expertise are also needed. (2) Conceptual framework (including proximate and background determinants of mortality) to set priorities and allocate resources. (3) Appropriate health and social interventions to meet people's needs. Participants endorsed the primary health care movement as enunciated at Alma-Ata, and stressed the importance of anti-malarial activities. They criticized reliance on technological measures without adequate attention to changing personal behavior. (4) Consideration of

the financial, administrative and cultural context. (5) Activation of government political will to focus scarce resources on health.

Goals

(1) A number of countries, notably in Africa and South Asia, have not achieved the progress needed to reach Plan of Action targets in life expectancy and infant mortality. Mortality goals should thus be restated and feasible targets set for mortality reduction, specific to groups of countries that are currently at different levels of mortality. Progress should continue to be monitored by the relevant international organizations.

(2) Individuals and families should be provided, as a basic human right, with all information and resources necessary to control their own health situations.

(3) Important intermediate goals are affordable access to health care for all segments of the population and active community participation.

(4) Social instruments such as improving water supply and disposal, providing housing, reducing pollution, etc., have an important impact in mortality.

Programs

(1) A general reorientation toward prevention would allow substantial economics in health expenditure. For example, to curb neonatal and maternal mortality special emphasis should be given to maternal nutrition programs.

(2) Because fertility regulation is one of the most effective ways to reduce perinatal, infant and maternal mortality and morbidity, family planning should be promoted as an important health measure in all MCH programs. The recommendations of the Expert Group on Fertility and Family should be considered in conjunction with these recommendations. Special efforts are needed to reduce involuntary infertility as well as unwanted births with the attendant risks of illegal abortion.

(3) Among the social policies with the greatest effects on health and mortality are those related to education. Because formal maternal education is so important in family health and child survival, schooling for all girls should be given top priority and mass education campaigns encouraged for women.

Data Collection, Research, and Technical Cooperation

(1) Mortality data in countries and regions are often seriously inadequate for formulating programs. Research is recommended on the effectiveness of different health systems in different contexts as well as on the effects of lifestyle on health and problems associated with aging.

(2) Better technical cooperation is needed by international agencies as well as more assistance to countries to stimulate health programs through training; resources for program formulation, implementation and evaluation; and increased support for IEC efforts, information exchange and data processing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARYRECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON FERTILITY AND FAMILY

In response to resolution 1981/87 of the Economic and Social Council, the Expert Group on Fertility and Family convened in New Delhi from 5 to 11 January, 1983 to appraise the conditions of fertility and family with respect to the following high priority issues: (1) modernization and the costs and value of children; (2) family structure; (3) choice in childbearing; (4) economic activity of women; and (5) goals, policies and technical cooperation. The findings and recommendations of the Expert Group will be presented to the International Conference on Population in August 1984 for consideration in the review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action.

Population Policy

(1) Fertility decline does not always await the achievement of critical thresholds in the modernization process. Therefore, all governments should establish population policies, with their own quantitative targets, on the basis of fullest possible knowledge about their national demographic situation and its economic and social consequences. These should be consistent with the principles of human rights, including the provision of full information necessary to practice family planning. They should be formulated relevant to the wide range of factors influencing fertility in a manner likely to meet with early success and wise use of resources. Every effort should be made to inform the population of national goals as well as their rationale.

(2) There are no populations in which low fertility is combined with sustained high mortality, thus greater efforts are warranted to promote a decline of general mortality, with special attention to infants and children.

(3) Because the economic contribution of children is a factor in high fertility, institutional changes should be initiated to provide substitutes for children as the principal source of old-age support. Child labor laws and compulsory schooling should also be implemented, but these were viewed as unlikely to reduce the labor value of children unless other conditions, such as the introduction of alternative social support systems, and the opening to women of educational and extra-familial job opportunities, are also favorable.

Conditions of Women and Men

(1) The group emphasized (a) the need to give women the opportunity for productive pursuits other than childbearing by providing equal access to education, as well as full integration into the economic, social and political life of the community, and (b) the importance of acknowledging the domestic duties of men and of establishing systems that encourage men as well as women to assume these domestic responsibilities.

(2) Strong activities in addition to legislation are required to increase women's earning opportunities, such as marketable skills training, access to credit, and support systems that enable both men and women to combine parental

roles with economic activities. In high unemployment situations, income-generating projects should be developed and special steps taken to ensure that women's participation in the labor force will not be compromised.

(3) Governments should (a) enact social measures that raise marriage age by increasing young women's educational and employment opportunities and by providing them with access to family planning services and (b) enact and enforce laws against child marriage.

Family Planning

(1) Governments should make possible the distribution of all effective, safe and legal methods of family planning, with particular attention to improving services to rural areas and breastfeeding mothers and providing follow-up services. Special education, counselling and contraceptive services should be given to adolescents in conformity with their human rights as individuals, with due consideration for prevailing cultural values.

(2) Community integration and voluntary programs should be encouraged.

(3) Well executed, innovative information, education and communication programs (reflecting local conditions) can accelerate the adoption of small family norms and are particularly needed to reach the large number of adult illiterates.

International Cooperation

(1) It is desirable to strengthen government collaboration and coordination of activities with bilateral, multilateral, public and private organizations at all levels to support policy initiatives and harmonize assistance so as to derive the greatest possible benefit. A set of priorities should be established with the donor community in light of the World Plan of Action.

(2) There is a need to increase international population assistance, with particular emphasis on long-term commitments and operational aid. Technical cooperation should be provided, among other things, for strengthening data collection and dissemination, program evaluation and analysis. Assistance should also be provided to improve managerial quality in developing countries.

Research and Training

(1) Financial and other support is needed to promote training for all relevant personnel, e.g., in demography, management, and communication techniques.

(2) Highest priority should be given to improving national population data; efforts such as censuses and fertility surveys deserve encouragement. More research is needed on institutional and cultural determinants of fertility because of the important opportunities this offers for population policy intervention. In addition, governments and funding agencies should support operational research to improve program effectiveness and biomedical research to expand the number of safe and acceptable contraceptives, particularly for men. Developing countries should increase their capacity to monitor contraceptive safety and acceptability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, MIGRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

In response to resolution 1981/87 the Expert Group on Population Distribution, Migration and Development was convened at Hammamet, Tunisia from 21 to 25 March 1983 to examine issues concerning (1) conceptual approaches to internal and international migration, (2) the relationships between migration, rural development and urbanization in developing and developed countries, (3) population distribution policies and (4) international migration trends and policies. The Group's findings will be presented to the International Conference on Population in August 1984 for consideration in their review of the World Population Plan of Action.

Population Distribution and Internal Migration

(1) An overwhelming majority of governments have denoted internal migration and population distribution as one of their explicit demographic concerns. Because population movements are a reflection of socio-economic inequity and inefficiency both internally and internationally, the Group recommends that they be viewed within the historical development context of each country concerned and that policies be based on a comprehensive evaluation of costs and benefits to individuals, households, different socio-economic groups, communities, regions and the country as a whole. Different types of population movement must be evaluated in terms of their direction, duration and characteristics. Demographic goals should be adopted not for their own sake but in order to achieve broader societal goals such as greater income equity. Because population distribution policies take time to become effective, they should not be abandoned in response to short-term exigencies.

(2) Population distribution policies must be comprehensive in order to succeed. Thus, rural and urban development strategies should be complementary. A balanced approach combines rural development strategies with policies regarding small towns, as well as medium-sized, large and primate cities. Governments are urged to review their major programs to make explicit their effects on the geographic distribution of population. Public investments should be allocated in ways conducive to population distribution goals as a way of improving the integration of spatial and sectoral planning. Since population distribution policies might complement programs aimed at reducing fertility, the complex relationship between such factors as fertility, age structure and migration ought to be clearly understood.

(3) In formulating migration and rural development policy, a thorough analysis would include institutional work practices, distribution of rural income, access to land and other non-labor factors of production, etc., as well as a consideration of the interactions between rural and urban areas. Rural development programs should not seek population retention alone but rather be primarily directed towards increasing agricultural production and welfare through land reform and other measures.

(4) The movement away from urban areas now experienced by many developed countries is not seen likely to be repeated in developing nations in the short or medium term -- whereas the momentum for continued city expansion is very

strong. To balance distribution, policies should emphasize the economic strengths of small towns and medium-sized cities rather than try to attract capital-intensive and large scale industry. To mitigate costs governments might phase investment and should not attempt to decentralize if urban centralization still contributes to the overall process of development.

(5) Policies should not restrict or compel mobility of individuals in predefined ways. Human rights of migrants must be safeguarded and assistance to them provided, including encouragement of networks and associations. There is a need for policies that would harness the potential contributions to development of both migrants and the informal sector. Although women are being brought into labor markets throughout the developing world, it is often at the lowest rung and their migration problems have received little attention. The Group, therefore, recommends policies to increase women's status with particular attention to migrant women and those left without support in rural areas.

(6) There is a need to improve technical cooperation and training to increase the developing countries' ability to formulate, evaluate and implement population distribution policies.

International Migration

(1) All policies on international migration should safeguard the human, economic and social rights of individuals, including those of non-nationals, as set forth in international conventions. They should grant access to health and social services, protect illegal migrants from abuse and create awareness of the issues involved.

(2) Receiving countries should take into account not only their own needs but also migrants' wellbeing, needs of sending countries and long-term complications of migration. Bilateral and multilateral agreements may regulate migration, protect and assist migrants and protect the interest of countries involved. The international community should seek a durable solution to the refugee problem, help repatriate or support asylum for refugees, and improve monitoring of human rights violations and implementation of instruments governing international migration as well as provide technical assistance to developing countries wishing to reattract skilled citizens from abroad.

Promotion of Knowledge and Policies

(1) Governments and the international community are urged to promote data collection and analysis, institutional development, training, monitoring, and information exchange on the status, causes and consequences of population distribution and migration (both internal and international) and the formulation, implementation and evaluation of relevant policies.

(2) Taking into account national development and family impact, research should prioritize: (1) migration as a modifying factor in labour force participation and structure, (2) its impact on employment, (3) its influence on the redistribution of wealth via, inter alia, the use of remittances, and (4) its effects on the status of women.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON POPULATION, RESOURCES,
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1981/87, the Expert Group on Population, Resources, Environment and Development was convened at Geneva from 25 to 29 April 1983 as part of the preparations for the International Conference on Population to be held in Mexico City from 6 to 13 August 1984. The recommendations deal with food and nutrition; resources and the environment; economic and social development; integration of population in policy planning; and research.

Current Trends

Since the last World Population Conference in 1974, there has been steadily increasing recognition of the importance of the interrelations between demographic change and socioeconomic development, resulting in the adoption of explicit population policies in many countries and the expansion of family planning services. As a result of population pressures, governments are also realizing that they must also manage their environment in such a way as to preserve or augment the natural resource base.

Although it has been recognized that the achievement of development can eventually reduce rates of population growth, even reduced rates can result in large absolute increments to the world population over time. Furthermore, the world economy is undergoing a period of slow growth during which demographic transition is less likely unless other measures to improve social equity are undertaken. Growth rates in gross domestic product (GDP) of developing countries have fallen to the lowest levels ever recorded and the burden of external debt is severe. For the low-income petroleum importing countries, production increases have barely exceeded population growth in the past two decades. For the future, rates of investment and the productivity of capital are likely to decline, further worsening long-term economic prospects.

With respect to natural resources, concerns are developing over the future supply and productivity of arable land. Since 1970 the number of acres of new arable land brought into production each year has sharply declined. In Asia, nearly all potentially arable land is being cultivated, and in Latin America and Africa, expansion of cultivation on tropical soils will have to be carefully managed to prevent degradation of fragile soils. The concept of resources, however, should not be limited to material resources drawn directly from nature but should include capital goods, technology and human resources.

Food and Nutrition

Although on a global basis food production has kept pace with population growth, on a national basis per capita food production has declined in about half of the developing countries. In Africa, population grew at nearly twice the rate of food production between 1970-1980.

According to the FAO, by the year 2000, 65 developing countries would be unable to feed their projected populations assuming the low current level of agriculture inputs; 19 countries would be unable to feed projected populations even with high levels of inputs. Food resources are sufficient on a global basis to meet current and projected future needs, but these resources are maldistributed. Increased international trade can correct the current maldistribution of world food resources, but food importation by low-income developing countries will divert limited foreign exchange earnings from the purchase of capital goods needed for economic development.

Given the importance of population growth as a factor in determining total food consumption, policies to slow the rate of population growth would contribute to increasing the availability and lowering the price of food. At the same time, governments are encouraged to meet expanded food needs through substantial investments in rural infrastructure, including irrigation systems and extension services; through the expansion of land under cultivation, where appropriate; through reform of land-tenure systems; and through the application of modern agricultural technologies in ways designed to minimize negative environmental effects.

Balance should be achieved between the goal of food self-sufficiency and comparative advantage in international trade. Finally, nutrition education should be stressed with emphasis on locally available foods, and there should be more effective mechanisms for sharing of world food supplies during times of emergency.

Resources and Environment

While the agricultural carrying capacity of land resources can be augmented, more intensive cultivation of marginal lands may increase the risks of erosion, desertification, waterlogging, soil salinization, shortening of fallow periods, deforestation and the use of organic matter as fuel instead of fertilizer. In some developing countries, efforts to feed an expanding population have already contributed to the degradation of the land resource base. In the case of Latin America, two-thirds of future projected land expansion would take place in areas where such ecological risks are high.

Globally, by the year 2000, two-thirds of the 1.1 billion hectares of closed forests would disappear, mostly because of land clearing for food production. Thousands and possibly millions of plant and animal species important in the development of new medical, industrial and agricultural products may disappear. Moreover, temporary gains in cultivatable land through deforestation may be offset by rapid declines in soil fertility and negative effects on water retention.

Desertification, if unchecked, will severely degrade by the year 2000, an additional area twice the size of the world's current deserts. Erosion and soil depletion are worsened by the increasing number of farmers practicing shifting cultivation and consequent reduced fallow periods. Half the world's irrigated lands have been damaged by salinization, alkalinization or waterlogging.

Although other natural resources, including minerals and conventional energy sources do not pose a problem of absolute scarcity over the next two decades, their exploitation and distribution have important implications for investment, technological progress, conservation and international trade patterns. A natural resource which may pose a scarcity problem is water. Increasing competition for water for urban and industrial use may put severe strains on supplies available for agricultural use.

The importance of maintaining and protecting the resource base and the quality of the environment while at the same time meeting the demands of present and future populations requires responsible measures including: preparation of environment impact statements for large-scale projects; proper disposal of hazardous industrial and agricultural wastes; protection of resource productivity; establishment of air and water pollution control mechanisms and the protection of genetic diversity.

Economic and Social Development

Inequality of income, assets and access to public services has a significant impact on the relationships between population, resources, environment and development. Population growth and patterns of development also contribute to perpetuating inequalities within and between countries. Internationally, the relative gains that developing countries could otherwise have realized from their generally high rates of economic growth during the past 20 years have been reduced by population growth. On a national level, labor force expansion relative to capital and land has reduced wage rates and rural population pressures have helped create land holdings too small to be viable. Government subsidies for education and other services to the poor have also been diluted by population expansion, and high fertility may have limited the capacity of families to invest in health and education for their children.

The efficient utilization of available human resources is essential for the elimination of poverty in developing countries. Levels of employment, unemployment and underemployment are determined in the long run by a combination of factors, including demographic trends, patterns of technological change, labor force participation and government development policies.

Governments are encouraged to redress social and economic inequities through changes in land tenure systems, greater attention to the needs of less developed regions and rural areas, reduction in barriers to the international flow of goods and workers, decentralization of industry, greater attention to primary health, including family planning and potable water supplies, increased human resources development through more appropriate education and training, greater emphasis on opportunities for women and the development of community institutions to assist the aged. Progress in these areas will have a favorable impact, in turn, on population trends.

Integration of Population in Policy and Research Requirements

In countries where there are imbalances between trends in population growth and present and projected resource and environmental requirements, governments are urged to adopt and implement, within the context of development policies, population policies which will contribute to redressing such imbalances. Consideration should be given to establishing or strengthening national population commissions and public education programs to encourage popular participation.

Improved methods should be developed for producing long-range demographic projections that take into account the interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development on the national and international level. Additional studies are needed on agricultural carrying capacity, and research in the areas of forestry, crop varieties and tropical agriculture should be given priority. Additional research is also needed in such areas as land-tenure and market systems, consumption patterns by class, resettlement schemes and the variety of interrelationships between population and various social or economic variables. Developing countries should cooperate among themselves and with developed countries to maximize resources for research and development.

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

MEXICO CITY

AUGUST 15 - 16, 1984

Summary of Recommendations for the Further
Implementation of the
World Population Plan of Action

Prepared by the Secretariat of the Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, based on the "Proposals for recommendations for the further implementation of the World Population Plan of Action: report of the Secretary-General, (United Nations E/CONF.76/PC/11).

Summary of the
Recommendations for the further implementation of the
World Population Plan of Action
relating to the Committee Sessions of the
International Parliamentary Assembly

Population and Development Policies

1. Governments should take population trends fully into account when formulating their development plans.
2. Governments are urged to adopt population and development policies that are mutually reinforcing. Such policies should be formulated with particular attention to the family and community levels.
3. Governments are encouraged to provide adequate resources and to adopt innovative measures for the implementation of population policy.
4. Governments which consider their population growth rate detrimental to their national purposes are invited to set quantitative population growth targets.
5. Governments which have adopted or intend to adopt national fertility goals should translate these goals into specific policies that are clearly understood by the citizens.
6. Governments which have adopted or intend to adopt fertility policies are urged to establish programme targets at the operational level, respecting the basic right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.
7. Governments are urged to base policies at influencing population distribution on a comprehensive evaluation of costs and benefits to individuals, families, communities, regions, and the country as a whole.
8. Governments are urged, in formulating population distribution policies, to take into account the policy implications of various forms of population mobility to consider the direction, duration, and characteristics of these movements.
9. Governments are urged to review their socioeconomic policies to improve the integration of population factors in territorial and sectoral planning.
10. Governments which have adopted, or intend to adopt a comprehensive urbanization policy, should seek to integrate such policies into the overall development planning process, to reduce current high migration to capital cities and other large urban centres, to develop medium-sized towns, and to reduce rural-urban and regional inequalities.

11. Governments are invited to develop an adequate corps of trained persons for effective formulation and implementation of integrated population and development policies. Governments must make increased efforts to facilitate the integration of population studies into the training curricula for policy-makers and executives who plan and implement development programmes.

12. Policy-makers are encouraged to promote and support actions to achieve an integrated approach to the solution of population and development problems by arousing public awareness and working towards the implementation of national population policies.

Status of Women

13. Governments are strongly urged to take all necessary measures to increase the level of education attained by women, as there is a close relationship between the educational level of mothers and the survival of their children.

14. Governments are strongly urged to integrate women fully into all phases of the development process. Governments should pursue action programmes to improve and protect the legal rights and status of women by identifying and removing institutional barriers to women's education, training, and employment.

15. Governments should ensure that women are free to participate in the labour force. Governments should create opportunities and conditions such that activities outside the home can be combined with child-rearing and household activities.

16. Government's policies should encourage delay in the commencement of childbearing.

17. Governments should make efforts to raise the mean age at marriage in countries in which the mean age at marriage is low.

18. Governments are urged to tabulate and publish population and related data separately by sex, so that the situation of women is rendered clearly and in order to measure the impact on women of changes that will ensue from implementation of the World Population Plan of Action.

Improving the Delivery of Family Planning Services

19. Governments are urged to ensure that all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.

20. Governments should make universally available information, education, and means to assist couples and individuals to achieve their desired family size.
21. Governments are urged to support family planning as a health measure in maternal and child health programmes.
22. Governments are strongly urged to allocate the necessary resources to family planning services.
23. Governments are urged to improve the quality and enhance the effectiveness of family planning services and of the monitoring and follow-up of those services.
24. Governments should increase their support to the management of population programmes.
25. Governments should give priority to service and operational research, including acceptability of programme and methods, and programme design and delivery.
26. Governments are urged to allocate increased resources for research in human reproduction and fertility regulation in order to improve the safety and efficacy of existing family planning methods and to develop new methods.
27. Governments are urged to allocate increased contributions for population and population-related programmes.

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

MEXICO CITY

AUGUST 15 - 16, 1984

Guide Questions for Discussion

Guide Questions for Discussion
of Committee Session
on Status of Women

Education

1. What educational level does the typical woman achieve in your country? What is the educational level achieved by the typical man? Are illiteracy statistics different for women than for men?
2. What kinds of educational policies and programs to help women reduce illiteracy and achieve a higher level of education do you favor?

The Law

1. What is the minimum marriage age set by the laws of your country? Do men and women have the same right to initiate divorce? After divorce are fathers required by law to support their former wives and their children?
2. Can women - whether they are married or unmarried -
 - legally own property
 - inherit property
 - decide how to spend income that they've earned
 - make contracts in their own name and maintain bank accounts or financial credit as individuals?
3. What changes in law do you recommend as most essential to improving the status of women?

Income-Generating Activities

1. Of all people in the labor force, what percentage of the paid labor force do women make up? Of all women, what percentage have entered the paid labor force? What kinds of jobs are typically open to women? What kinds of jobs are typically considered man's work only?
2. What percentage of farm land is owned by women? What percentage is owned by men, but cultivated by women? Do women receive or buy in their own names farm supplies?
3. What percentage of the households in your country are headed by single women? Of single mothers, what percentage are the sole supports of their families?
4. What kinds of policies and programs to help women better generate income for themselves (or for themselves and their families) do you recommend?

Health

1. Are little girls more likely than little boys to suffer illness and death? Are little boys more likely than little girls to be given medical treatment in case of illness?

2. How long can the average woman expect to live? The average man? What are the leading causes of death among women in general? Among women of reproductive age? Which health services have helped reduce the death rate among women?

Guide Questions for Discussion
of Committee Session
on Improving the Delivery of Family Planning Services

In your country:

1. What percentage of couples have access to the means with which to space births and to have only the number of children they want?
2. Are family planning services delivered primarily by physicians? Are these services available much more in the urban areas than in the rural areas?
3. By law, are health or family planning workers other than physicians allowed to deliver some family planning services? Which ones? Which services are required by law to be performed only by physicians? What are the reasons for these laws?
4. Are contraceptives distributed by commercial retailers such as pharmacies or peddlers? Are they distributed by the government to commercial retailers?
5. If commercial distribution occurs, do the retailers sell the contraceptives at higher, the same or lower prices than what it costs the retailer to acquire the contraceptives? If the prices to the customer are the same or lower than the cost to the retailer, how is the retailer compensated financially?
6. In the urban areas, what kinds of patterns for organizing contraceptive services (e.g., clinics, neighborhood workers) are the most effective?
7. To deliver services well to communities at the village level, what is most needed?
8. What percentage of couples have access to information about family planning? Does media play a role in getting this information to couples? How?
9. What percentage of your government's budget is spent on
 - maternal and child health services (broadly defined)
 - principally family planning services
 - population-related research: service improvement, operations, basic human reproductive and contraceptive development research.
10. How are non-professional family planning workers trained? How are nurses and physicians trained to be more effective in offering family planning information and services? How are managers of family planning programs trained? What kinds of training programs do you recommend?
11. Is there a national standard upholding the rights of men and women to a free and fully informed choice about the use of family planning services? Is this standard set by the government or by private organizations? How is informed consent sought out and assured?

Guide Questions for Discussion
of Committee Session
on Population and Development Policies

1. If your country has a population policy (an official government document setting the government on record as favoring the slowdown of rapid population growth), what is the basis for this policy? Has the population policy been established
 - o to encourage economic growth?
 - o to assure better health for mothers and children?
 - o to assure that good schools, hospitals and other human services can be maintained for a population of a workable size?
 - o to protect natural resources and the environment?
 - o to prevent current social and economic development efforts from erosion by rapid population growth?

2. How are official population policies best established?
 - o by studying population trends and gaining an informed understanding of choices for the future of the nation?
 - o by working with political groups and private organizations to educate the public and to advocate for population policies?
 - o by high level personnel meetings with policymakers in the government to persuade them to take into account population facts and population problems in making decisions about allocations of funds and resources?
 - o by asking public leaders (government officials, parliamentarians) or private leaders (outstanding physicians, heads of family planning associations) from other nations with population policies to share their experiences with parliamentarians and government leaders in your nation?

3. Do you favor keeping population policies separate and distinct from development policies or do you support blending population policy into development policies so that population programs are an integral part of overall development programs? What are the merits of each approach?

4. Some governments have decided to set explicit growth rates as policy. What do you consider as the most significant rationales for setting these kinds of targets?

5. What are the most effective ways for governments to assure the protection of the basic right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly when they want to have children and how many children they want to have?

6. Should population policies address migration patterns within countries (rural to urban)? Should they address migration between nations? What are the most effective ways to address these migration issues?
7. Within the context of respect for individual freedom, can population policies most effectively help assure that populations do not become highly concentrated in just some areas of the country, leaving other areas to neglect and decay? How can this best be achieved?
8. A number of countries have used economic incentives to affect fertility. In Europe these are utilized to raise fertility. Throughout much of Asia, they are utilized in an attempt to lower it. What are the ethical and program considerations relevant to the use of incentives?
9. Population policies are sensitive in many countries. What strategies can be adopted to assure a wide base of both political and popular support for population policies?
10. A number of countries have established national population commissions, high-level population units in a national planning council, or family planning coordinating groups. Are these effective? What is the most appropriate model? If so, how can parliamentarians foster their establishment and monitor them?

- Global Committee—304 East 45th Street (12th Floor), New York, 10017, USA Tel: (212) 953-7947 TELEX: 4994118 GCPPD CABLE: GLOCOMPAR New York
- Mexican Chamber of Deputies—Fragua #3 (2nd Floor), Mexico City, D.F. Tel: (0-11 525) 546-6939