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**OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Statement of the Under-Secretary for Population, Ministry
of Internal Affairs of Argentina,
Mr. Aldo CARRERAS**

New York, June 30th, 1999.

After intense months of work, we are meeting once more with the tremendous task to discuss and find answers to the complex challenges posed by population and development issues.

In doing so, these meetings were called upon in order to evaluate the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, which deal with several issues related to population and development.

That is why, in time of doing an evaluation, we cannot set aside any of these issues and without recalling the enlightening principles that guided the Programme of Action.

The recognition of the wide range of elements that needs to be present in the consideration of development has to seek for the improvement of the quality life of everybody by requiring the establishment of a common ground and the full respect of the different ethic, religious and cultural values.

Development should be human-centered and it should have a multi-dimensional approach since the well-being of people poses various and different aspects to be considered. Consequently, every formulation of national, regional and international strategies, actions and policies should be founded on integral and integrated perspectives. This has been clearly reflected in the principles of the Programme of Action, which were accordingly developed in each of its chapters.

We are focused on the well-being of population as the primary concern of development. Therefore we cannot forget among our fundamental goals the eradication of poverty and the fulfillment of the basic needs of all human beings and the protection of their universal human rights and freedoms, including the right to development. Hence, the social progress cannot be subordinated to the economic growth; the economy should be a tool for the individual and social development of human beings. It is the population and not the economy the central concern of development.

One of the fundamental principles much discussed in this conference has to do with the liberty of persons to decide the number and spacing of their

children. The right to a truly, free and responsible choice need to be done in such a context where it is possible the access to education, health and work.

My Delegation would like to remind once more that what needs to be eradicated are not the poor but the poverty. Even for those who keep foreseeing the chaos of the demographic explosion have to admit that real development is the best remedy against the ghost of over-population.

Reproductive health is an important concern within the primary health framework. However, reproductive health cannot be only understood as the regulation of fertility. In fact, the control of population growth cannot be used as a “magic formula” for development. A broader concept of reproductive health should be taken into account in this conference. We consider that too much time has been spent on this narrow interpretation of reproductive health and very little to those related to real development. It is enough to pay attention to the quantity and diversity of issues incorporated in the Programme of Action in 1994 to realize that in the last years some aspects have been overshadowed by others.

It would be appropriate to recall the concept proposed by the U.N. in the sense that family planning “(...) implies the provision of education not just on contraception but also on enhancing fertility, family-life education, paternal responsibility, sexuality, etc.” Nevertheless, “(...) family planning has been used to describe a much more limited approach emphasizing the provision of contraceptives services for achieving population control (...). This approach may be much more concerned with achieving macro-level targets than serving the needs of individuals.”

In this context the we want to reaffirm once more the fundamental principles of the Government of Argentina in **regard** to population and development:

1.- The goal setting on population and development should be competence and sovereignty of each country, in agreement with its own national policies, under the guide of respect to the human dignity and the free and responsible right to decide;

¹ UNITED NATIONS – Department of International Economic and Social **Affairs** (1987); The Family: National Family Policies: their relationships to the role of the family in the development process. Vienna.

2.- The assistance to development should not be conditioned to the adoption of certain programs, incentives, disincentives, goals or quotas in demographic aspects. The “voluntary” principle, which means the complete absence of coercion in the application of family planning, is a basic principle of the ICPD Programme;

3.- As the Principle 9 of the Programme of Action emphasizes, a priority objective of population policy is the promotion and protection of the family, by recognizing that it is the basic group of society and therefore it constitutes a social fundamental good. The social policies have to be oriented in order to offer the most suitable framework for its development. Among the rights of the family is of utmost importance to safeguard the prior right of parents on the education of children as proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

4.- It is a fact the close interrelationship and interdependence between development and education. This relationship influences positively and directly on the health condition of population. It has been proved that the completion of the elementary education of women has significant influence on the decreasing of the infant mortality and poor health;

5.- Policies oriented to the increase of life expectancy and the improvement of the integral health of population should be encouraged. Family planning has value only in reference to the improvement of the quality of life of the family;

6.- The family is the natural and fundamental element of a community and therefore it must be protected by society and the State. A true development can only happen when the rights of the family are recognized and promoted. In this context, human life should be respected from the very moment of conception until natural death. This principle cannot be changed by enacting laws nor by demographic policies. In consequence, the Government of Argentina does not agree that abortion, as service as well as method of regulation of fertility, be included within the concept of “reproductive health” (Programme of Action).

7.- The continuous promotion of women’s insertion in all the spheres of social, economic, politic and cultural activities is essential in order to strengthen the equity of opportunities between men and women that

contributes to the development of our society. Discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and human dignity, basis of justice, liberty and world peace.

8.- International migration policies should ensure an effective regulation of the migrant movement, seeking an harmonious insertion of the immigrant in the local society, in accordance to the labor legislation of each country. It is essential to improve policies in order to protect the rights of legal migrants as well as to combat against those who promote their illegal traffic.

9.- Among the problems raised by the structural changes on population, it is crucial to highlight the elderly: their problems, material needs, health care and love.

10.- With regards to international, technical and financial assistance on population and development issues, it is necessary a closer compromise from the international community, multilateral institutions, and donors countries which should allow the increase of the resources allocated to social investment, specially in education, health and those services that contribute to the fulfillment of the basic needs of the population.

Mr. President, the Government of Argentina does not want to let go this remarkable opportunity, after five years from Cairo, to reaffirm its compromise with the search for equity and social justice, unavoidable objectives of any population and development policy.