



DER ÜBERSEE-CLUB e.V.



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Good evening ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Schmidt, esteemed parliamentarians, members of Der Übersee-Club and the German Foundation for World Population.

It is also a great pleasure for me to be here in Germany, a country that has done so much to support development efforts and which is one of the major donors to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In Cairo, Germany set an example for the other countries to follow, by announcing at the International Conference on Population and Development an increase in Germany's financial contribution to international population assistance by an additional 50 million deutsch marks per year. This was a very important announcement, inspiring other countries to follow suit. I would also like to congratulate here Mr. Schmidt and his co-authors for their thought provoking publication entitled „Because the Land has to Change“. This booklet made a significant contribution to discussions also about the importance of population and development issues.

As Germany has recognized, support for population programmes and policies are an urgent global priority, today more than ever. World population is currently 5.7 billion. According to United Nations projections, annual population increments are likely to remain above 86 million until the year 2015.

There has been great progress over the past 30 years – lowered birth and death rates including reductions in infant mortality and increase in life expectancy – the progress has been linked to increased availability of basic health and family planning services, higher levels of education and income, political support for population policies, and changes in attitudes toward family planning. Contraceptive use has increased fivefold since 1965-70. But what we do now and in the near future will determine the size of population: projections for 2015 range from 7.10 billion to 7.83 billion, and for 2050 from 7.9 billion to 11.9 billion.

We have learned from experience that population issues can best be addressed by meeting the needs of individual women and men. This was acknowledged by 180 countries last September when they overwhelmingly endorsed the idea that population and development are inseparable, and supported a new strategy focusing on

individuals needs and human rights rather than on demographic targets. In approving the new strategy, the international community has acknowledged that investing in people, in their health and education, is the key to sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

In one of the strongest statements of its kind in a United Nations document, the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo clearly stated that giving women the tools and means to manage their lives was both an important end in itself and a key element of sustainable development.

Following the ICPD, our task now, both collectively and individually, is to ensure that the optimism which has emerged from the process and which the Programme of Action reflects is turned into tangible benefits for people everywhere.

Countries are focusing their attention on the recommendations made in the Programme of Action, particularly the emphasis on promoting gender equality, the advancement of women, and on ensuring that individual women and men have access to a full range of quality reproductive health services. The experiences of population programmes around the world attest to the soundness of this approach: given choices, women will make decisions that are beneficial to their own interest, and to the interest of their families. This, in turn, will help stabilise population growth and will further the economic and social goals of their society.

Of particular importance in Cairo was the agreement by all countries, developed and developing alike, on the level of resources that will be required to implement the Programme of Action's call for universal access by 2015 to a comprehensive package of reproductive health care services, encompassing family planning, safe motherhood, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and related programmes.

It was estimated that in developing countries and those with economies in transition, the package will cost US \$ 17 billion per year in the year 2000 – about three times what is being spent today – and US \$ 21.7 billion by 2015. Developing countries themselves are expected to be able to provide two thirds of the necessary funds; it was agreed that about one third, or around \$ 5.7 billion in the year 2000 and \$ 7.2 billion in 2015 will have to come from international donors.

In light of this agreement, a number of industrialised countries, including Germany, have already indicated that they will increase their support of population and reproductive health programmes. In addition to greater support for multilateral programmes like UNFPA's, more bilateral assistance is needed for development activities for countries in Africa. In recent years African governments have recognised that rapid population growth and urbanisation hamper social and economic development. They need more support to implement the population programmes that most of them have now initiated. Also crucial is greater support for programmes implemented by non-governmental organisations: the Cairo Programme of Action stresses the need for a broad and effective partnership between governments and nongovernmental organisations in formulating, implementing and monitoring population and development programmes.

It is also of utmost importance that Germany continues to provide leadership within the European Union to promote Union policies in support of the decisions taken in Cairo. We were very pleased to learn that the German ICPD Commission will continue and will coordinate German follow-up to Cairo. This is of vital importance because the achievements and the recommendations of the ICPD must be kept alive and before the public. As State Secretary Klaus-Jürgen Hedrich of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation said recently, more information is needed about global issues – and global strategies – so that people will understand the value of development cooperation.

The Cairo Conference was not an isolated event. The Programme of Action drew on the recommendations of the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Conference on Human Rights among others. The language of Cairo was endorsed last week by the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and will be part of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing this September. Helping women to help themselves as a basic element of sustainable development is accepted in these

Conferences as part of an ongoing process to see the social and economic agenda for the next century.

NGO's, parliamentarians, and leaders such as you and other groups who already recognize the importance of supporting efforts to advance women and strengthen population and reproductive health programmes as a strategy to help end poverty will be instrumental in bringing about an increased national commitment to these efforts. Your help has been especially vital in mobilizing public support for the goals of the Cairo Conference and in increasing resource allocations to population programmes and related social sectors such as education and primary health care. But we will need you to continue your heartening and vital support.

While the Cairo Conference was clearly a success, its real significance depends on the willingness of governments, local communities, the non-governmental sector, the international community and all concerned organisations and individuals to turn the recommendations of the Conference into tangible and effective action. This commitment will be of particular importance at the national and individual levels. To start with, the ICPD Programme of Action calls on all governments, with the assistance of non-governmental organisations and the United Nations system, to disseminate the results of the ICPD as widely as possible. This should ensure broad public support for ICPD goals, objectives and actions through follow-up meetings, joint government/NGO consultations, publications and the media. Rita Süßmuth, President of the Deutsche Bundestag and a well known advocate for women said recently, „It is our ethical duty to care about development and world population.“ NGO's, such as the German World Populations Foundations, will have to play a special role in seeing that awareness and support for the ICPD Programme of Action is maintained.

The Programme of Action recommends that all countries establish appropriate follow-up mechanisms, in partnership with parliamentarians, nongovernmental organisations, community groups and representatives of the media and the academic community. Such follow-up would inevitably entail the formulation of national action plans which would translate the ICPD Programme of Action into the national context. I am pleased to report that many countries are already actively engaged in the implementation of the agreements reached in Cairo.

At the international level, follow-up activities will be centred around three issues, namely resources, coordination and monitoring. With regard to financial assistance, one third of the resources needed for achieving the population-related goals in the ICPD Programme of Action are to come from international sources. Therefore, in order to be able to fully implement the actions spelled out in the Cairo document, it will be absolutely essential that the donor community fulfils its commitment. Not only as to complement domestic resources, but also as a genuine sign of partnership by developed countries to developing countries in dealing with global population issues, the European countries should set an example for others to follow, as they have done so well in the past.

With regard to international coordination, all institutes involved in population assistance should strengthen their interagency cooperation with a view to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes. The international community should also promote the exchange of information needed for the review of specific needs of countries, including emergency and temporary needs.

Monitoring progress in the implementation of the ICPD recommendations, at the international level, will require that all organizations involved in the field of population and development closely review their existing policy and programme guidelines to bring them in line with the recommendations of the ICPD. The United Nations Population Fund is already in the process of reviewing and revising its policy and programme guidelines in order to make them fully consistent with the priorities and objectives of the Programme of Action.

In addition, the UN General Assembly has endorsed the ICPD Programme of Action and subsequently the ECOSOC High Level Session in June 1995 will review the implications of the ICPD for the UN system as a whole. It will set a framework for an appropriate global monitoring system. The outcome of these discussions will have a major impact on international population related assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to stress again the responsibility we all share for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and the important role we all have in ensuring that the success, reached in one conference is expanded upon and brought forward in the next. Parliamentarians, NGO's, the media and the entire civil society have a significant role in this process.

At Cairo, as president of the European Union at that time, Germany was the spokesperson for Europe. Just as Germany made an important contribution to the ICPD, it has an equally critical role in fostering the full implementation of the agreements reached.

Since unification, Germany has also strengthened its role as a global player. This role is not just as a political and economic leader but includes global leadership in the establishment of sustainable development.

In the year 2000, the world exposition will be here in Germany, in Hannover. EXPO 2000 will be about managing the future and population will be one of EXPO's major themes. Let us hope that the end of the century, we will be well on the way to realizing the ICPD Programme of Action so that the 55 million visitors expected to your EXPO will have some good news and will be able to see the important part that Germany played in addressing these key global challenges.

I thank you for your commitment and resolve.

