



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ICPD+5 PREPCOM WEDNESDAY, 24 MARCH 1999

The ICPD+5 PrepCom opened on Wednesday, 24 March. Delegates met in Plenary to address organizational matters in the morning and hear official country statements in the afternoon. A Working Group convened in the afternoon to begin negotiations on proposals for action for the further implementation of the ICPD POA.

OPENING PLENARY

CPD-32 Chair Cliquet (Belgium) officially opened the PrepCom. Delegates elected by acclamation Anwarul Chowdhury (Bangladesh) as Chair of the PrepCom and the following as Vice-Chairs: Elza Berquó (Brazil), Ross Hynes (Canada), Armi Heinonen (Finland), Jack Wilmot (Ghana), Gabriella Vukovich (Hungary), Patricia Durrant (Jamaica), Ryu Yamazaki (Japan), Alexandru Niculescu (Romania) and Jotham Musinguzi (Uganda). Gabriella Vukovich will also act as Rapporteur. Delegates adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work (E/CN.9/1999/PC/1 and L.1).

Joseph Chamie, Director of the DESA Population Division, presented the Secretary-General's Report on the review and appraisal of progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the ICPD POA (E/CN.9/1999/PC/2), highlighting five major conclusions. First, the current period is demographically unprecedented in the history of humanity. Second, generally speaking, things are moving in the right direction; progress has been made in a number of areas, although it has been limited in some countries and regions. Third, many challenges remain, including the AIDS epidemic, rapid ageing of populations, adolescent reproductive behavior, undocumented migration and rapid population growth. Fourth, while financial resources are necessary, government leadership, priorities and commitment are the critical variables for successful POA implementation. Finally, the review concluded that the time to act is now; delaying needed action will exacerbate problems in the future, and action taken today will determine the quality of life and living conditions for generations to come.

Kerstin Trone, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, introduced the Secretary-General's Note on The Hague Forum (E/CN.9/1999/PC/3). She presented the outcome of the Forum on behalf of Forum President Nicolaas Biegan, highlighting youth, AIDS and financial resources as items receiving significant attention at the Forum. On youth, risks arising from youth being under-informed, under-educated and under-served in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) were highlighted, and family involvement in sexual education, government responsibility, and mandatory sexual education were called for. The need to confront the challenge of the AIDS epidemic was underscored. The lack of resources was identified as the major constraint to imple-

mentation, and reprioritization of government spending, increased core funding for UNFPA and increased private sector contributions were stressed.

Nafis Sadik, UNFPA Executive Director, noted key achievements since Cairo, including: a transformation in thinking about population and its relation to development; acceptance of the right to reproductive health (RH) and incorporation of a gender dimension into population policies and programmes; reduction in the incidence of abortion; and growth in partnerships between all relevant groups, including NGOs. She noted that GA Resolution 53/183 agreed not to renegotiate the POA during the ICPD+5 process. She then presented the Secretary-General's Report containing proposals for key actions to further POA implementation (E/CN.9/1999/PC/4). She highlighted proposals to: develop national policies to adjust to a rapid increase in the number of older people; remove gender inequality and establish women's rights; promote adolescent RH; confront HIV/AIDS; build and strengthen partnerships; and achieve the ICPD goal of US\$17 billion in total resources and US\$5.7 billion from the global community by the year 2000. On emergency contraception, she said WHO and medical authorities agree that the "so-called morning-after pill" is not an abortifacient, and called on delegates to be guided by science and common sense. Noting that the proposals before the meeting were realistic and affordable, she called for the will and renewed commitment to turn them into reality.

Sadik made a statement notifying delegates that some groups had been circulating documents that misrepresented the work of the PrepCom and that sought to undermine the process by fostering mistrust and incivility. She said these groups had used questionable and unethical practices, such as printing their documents on UN letterhead, and warned delegates to read all documents carefully. She expressed hope that the upcoming negotiations would be conducted in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation.

PLENARY

Delegates from the following countries and organizations gave formal statements in Plenary on preparations for the Special Session: Guyana, on behalf of the G-77/China; Germany, on behalf of the EU; Japan; China; Kazakhstan; India; the Republic of Korea; Brazil; Bangladesh; Indonesia; the US; Canada; Switzerland; Argentina; Guatemala; UNAIDS; Zambia; the WHO; the Holy See; Croatia; Spain; the Commission for Social Development; UNESCO; Colombia; the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development; the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy; Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith and Ethics; the World Population Foundation; and Catholics for a Free Choice.



Editor's Note: Due to space constraints, the ENB will not provide coverage of Plenary statements. The text of these speeches is available on the Internet at: <http://www.undp.org/popin/unpopcom/32ndsess/state.htm>

WORKING GROUP

Delegates convened in an informal Working Group in the afternoon. Chair Chowdhury introduced the draft working paper containing proposals for key actions for further implementation of the POA (E/CN.9/1999/PC/CRP.1), noting that the proposals were drawn from the Secretary-General's report and would serve as a basis for negotiation. Several delegates proposed including a preamble to provide context to the proposals.

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS:

Changing Age Structure and Ageing of the Population: On economic and social implications of demographic change, the US recommended making the proposal more action-oriented and focusing on the need for more research on the issue. Regarding greater investment in research on conditions among older persons, the EU stressed political action rather than research alone. The HOLY SEE said all basic social services should be covered. MALTA emphasized that the most immediate problem for developing countries was the lack of infrastructure and called for a reference to training and capacity.

Concerning systems to care for the elderly, NORWAY said referring to families may result in passing the burden to women and preferred referring to communities. NICARAGUA stressed the need to maintain reference to the family. Several delegates recommended inclusion of the needs of adolescents. On the creation of opportunities for people over age 60, several delegates stressed the role of governments, noting that the responsibility for the elderly cannot be left solely to civil society and NGOs. The US proposed provision of resources to enable the elderly to advocate for their needs independently. The EU and the HOLY SEE expressed concern with setting 60 as the threshold age defining elderly for all societies.

Regarding UN documentation of experiences with policies and programmes on ageing in more advanced countries, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the UN system's role also includes making suggestions and formulating recommendations. The G-77/CHINA, MALTA and NORWAY suggested documenting best practices from developed and developing countries. CANADA proposed drawing upon The Hague Forum's recommendations on ageing and youth and interactions between them. He suggested including a recommendation from the Parliamentarians' Forum calling for prioritization of the needs of adolescents, youth, the aged and people with disabilities.

Internal and International Migration: The G-77/CHINA proposed that internal migration and international migration be addressed separately, as in the POA, and that both countries of origin and destination be mentioned. JAPAN proposed a chapeau based on POA Chapter 2, which emphasizes that POA implementation is the sovereign right of each country consistent with national laws and development priorities.

On intensifying efforts to safeguard migrants' basic human rights by monitoring human rights violations, the HOLY SEE preferred safeguarding the dignity and human rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons by providing basic social services. The G-77/CHINA recommended deleting "basic" human rights and "ensuring punishment" rather than "imposing sanctions" on those who refuse to comply. Others also expressed difficulty with recommending imposing sanctions. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION preferred using appropriate tools of international law. The EU proposed deleting "irrespective of their legal status." JAPAN stressed the need for cooperation between countries of origin and destination to reduce the causes of undocumented migration.

On preventing international trafficking in migrants, CANADA proposed separate actions to address trafficking in migrants and trafficking of women and children. The EU proposed calling for the rapid completion of the draft UN protocol on trafficking of illegal migrants and adding action to improve access to RH and family planning

services for migrants and internally displaced persons, especially women and girls. The HOLY SEE suggested also addressing internal trafficking in migrants.

On initiatives to address challenges posed by international migration, the G-77/CHINA preferred referring to regional and sub-regional consultation processes "where appropriate," specified family disintegration as a particular challenge, and proposed new text on: making the option of remaining in one's country viable; the use of temporary migration by countries of destination to improve the skills of nationals in countries of origin; ratifying the convention on the protection of migrants and their families; and enabling family reunification of documented migrants. The HOLY SEE recommended including international protection of and assistance to refugees, taking into account the importance of family reunification. On efforts to improve data collection and analysis of migration, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed reference to the use of migration statistics methodologies. JAMAICA recommended adding efforts to develop international migration policies.

CANADA suggested additional actions to: explore the root causes of migration; ensure that legislation upholds asylum; protect and assist internally displaced persons and refugee women; and integrate documented migrants in countries of destination. The EU supported drawing attention to repatriation and reintegration of migrants, root causes of migration, and integration of documented migrants into host country societies. The US proposed new text on public information campaigns to educate citizens of receiving countries to appreciate migrants' contributions and inform potential migrants of the benefits of migration. MEXICO recommended text on research on the causes and consequences of internal migration. SWITZERLAND advocated referring to the active participation of NGOs.

Poverty, Economic Development and the Environment:

Several delegates called for inclusion of text from The Hague Forum Report on promoting a supportive economic environment to enable developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and on promoting an open, equitable international trading system, stimulating direct investment, reducing the debt burden and ensuring that structural adjustment programmes respond to social and environmental concerns. The EU noted the need to make this section more action-oriented. On efforts by industrialized countries to educate about the need for reduced consumption patterns, several delegates, including the EU, preferred calling for "sustainable production and consumption patterns." SWITZERLAND and others said this proposal should not be restricted to industrialized countries. Regarding proposed actions by developing countries, NICARAGUA supported greater emphasis on more resources and investment to eliminate poverty. BELIZE expressed concern at the lack of attention to indigenous peoples in the text. TURKEY proposed text supporting local authorities to prepare and implement action plans and share experiences.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Talk of bogus documents dominated discussions in the corridors on Wednesday. Upwards of six papers that feigned to be official UN documents by emulating UN-style layout and in some cases using UN letterhead had been circulated, employing language that delegates described as "regressive" and "pre-Cairo." This "treachery" caused such a disturbance that Nafis Sadik had to take the floor in Plenary to denounce the tactic and warn delegates to read with care. While some felt that this tactic would hurt rather than help the cause of its perpetrators, others were concerned that it foreshadowed that all too familiar controversies might cloud negotiations at the PrepCom.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Delegates will convene in morning and afternoon Plenary sessions, beginning at 10:00 am, to deliver formal statements.

WORKING GROUP: The Working Group will meet at 11:00 am to continue negotiations on the proposals for action for further POA implementation.