



ICPD+5 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 30 JUNE 1999

Delegates at the 21st Special Session of the UN General Assembly heard statements by 48 high-level governmental officials on the review and appraisal of implementation of the ICPD POA in morning, afternoon and evening Plenary sessions. In addition, representatives of seven UN agencies and five NGOs addressed the Committee of the Whole. Delegates continued informal consultations on bracketed paragraphs relating to plans to meet young people's needs, sex education and adolescent sexual and reproductive health late into the night and came close to reaching a consensus.

OPENING PLENARY

Jorge Pérez-Otermerin, Chair of the Delegation of Uruguay, opened the 21st Special Session of the UN General Assembly for the review and appraisal of implementation of the ICPD POA. Delegates appointed a Credentials Committee with the same membership as that of the 53rd regular session of the General Assembly, namely China, the US, the Russian Federation, Fiji, Jamaica, Mali, New Zealand, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Didier Opertti, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay and President of the 53rd regular session of the General Assembly, was elected President of the Special Session. He noted the population and development challenges faced by developing countries and highlighted the need to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development while ensuring that all people can reasonably share in its benefits. He stressed the importance of mobilizing resources for POA implementation and called on all countries to give further consideration to the volume of resources they assign to these issues.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the world has come to understand the pressures that consumption patterns and population growth and distribution have on the global environment. He said the ICPD spurred an improved understanding that individual aspirations to health, security and dignity are the essence of human rights, and that sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is a crucial part of those rights. He noted significant improvements in key demographic indicators over the past 25 years but stressed that much remains to be done. He highlighted the tremendous difference to human rights, prosperity and sustainable resource use that full implementation of the POA could make but underscored the need for adequate funding. Recalling the Cairo agreement to mobilize new financial resources, he noted that developing countries have proven their commitment but require external assistance, and called on delegates to reaffirm pledges made at Cairo. He said the Special Session provides a unique opportunity to confront one of the greatest challenges of the coming century and wished participants success in their deliberations and with POA implementation over the next five years.

PrepCom Chair Anwarul Chowdhury (Bangladesh) presented the records of the work of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) acting as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the UN General Assembly Special Session on the review and appraisal of ICPD POA implementation (A/S-21/2 and Add.1 and 2). He stated that the PrepCom had been open-ended to allow full participation of governments, observers, international organizations, NGOs and UN agencies. Noting that negotiations had been difficult yet fruitful, he highlighted substantial progress and the achievement of consensus on most of the text. He explained that a few paragraphs remained outstanding and would be addressed by the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole (COW). He emphasized that the review of implementation had enriched the understanding and deepened the consensus on the POA.

President Opertti presented the organization of work for the Special Session as contained in A/S-21/2. The Plenary elected to the General Committee of the Special Session officers of the 53rd regular session, consisting of 21 Vice Presidents and Chairs of six Main Committees. PrepCom Chair Chowdhury was elected to Chair the COW. The Plenary agreed to allow observers, representatives of regional commissions, UN agencies and NGOs to participate in the Special Session, and adopted the provisional agenda (A/S-21/1).

Delegates then heard statements on the overall review and appraisal of implementation of the ICPD POA by President Alberto Fujimori of Peru, as well as three Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers, 22 Ministers and 22 other high-level government officials. Plenary statements can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.undp.org/popin/unpopcom/32ndsess/gastatements/htm>.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair Chowdhury called to order the COW of the 21st Special Session. Delegates elected Bureau members of the PrepCom to serve as the COW's Bureau, including the following nine Vice-Chairs: Elza Berquó (Brazil), Ross Hynes (Canada), Armi Heinenon (Finland), Jacob Botwe Wilmot (Ghana), Patricia Durrant (Jamaica), Ryuichiro Yamazaki (Japan), Alexandru Niculescu (Romania), Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda) and Gabriella Vukovich (Hungary) as Rapporteur.

Chair Chowdhury noted that the COW had been instructed to address the overall review and appraisal of the ICPD POA, and referred delegates to the report of the Prepcom (A/S-21/2) and proposals for key actions for further implementation of the ICPD POA (A/S-21/2/Add.2). He said the COW would negotiate the draft proposals for key actions, which still contained seven bracketed paragraphs, in informal negotiations. He explained that the document would be considered by the Plenary once the COW reaches agreement on the text.

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Addressing the COW, Nafis Sadik, UNFPA Executive Director, said the ICPD consensus demonstrates the effectiveness of international partnership and cooperation. She noted that since Cairo, countries have, *inter alia*: integrated population issues into broader development policies; taken action to promote gender equity and equality; integrated family planning into broad and inclusive reproductive health services while giving safe motherhood appropriate attention; and addressed unsafe abortion as a serious public health problem. She said the PrepCom's proposed key actions respond to national development needs and support and reinforce global aspirations and national aims. She underscored the need for resources to enable implementation of the ICPD recommendations and urged countries to assign the highest priority to meeting the ICPD goals.

Joseph Chamie, Director of the UN DESA Population Division, outlined statistics that reflect the unacceptable living conditions and levels of development in many parts of the world. He stressed that financial resources are essential for all development efforts and stated that population must be considered when addressing any major global issue. He emphasized the need to base commitments and actions on sound data and solid scientific research.

Representatives of five UN specialized agencies and five NGOs also addressed the COW.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Commencing informal consultations, Chair Chowdhury urged delegates to seek consensus language on the remaining bracketed text. Noting that some delegates had indicated that agreement on text relating to adolescent SRH would be tied to agreement on text relating to plans to meet young people's needs and on education on population and health issues, he said they should aim to find acceptable language so that these paragraphs could be agreed together.

On **13(a)** (plans to meet young people's needs), CANADA, supported by several delegations, introduced compromise text emerging from informal consultations, which incorporated proposals from a number of delegations. SUDAN, SYRIA, LIBYA and the HOLY SEE urged inclusion of a reference to "the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents," which did not appear in the Canadian text. THAILAND stated that since the paragraph was directed at governments, a reference to parental rights was inappropriate. The PHILIPPINES, NORWAY and others supported text proposed by NAMIBIA, which included reference to "the active support of parents, communities, NGOs and the private sector." The US preferred active "participation and" support. EGYPT, SYRIA and others suggested replacing the term "young people" with "youth," but the US and JAMAICA objected. GHANA suggested adding that relevant policies and programmes be implemented "in line with ICPD commitments as well as other relevant international agreements and conventions," while THAILAND and the HOLY SEE preferred reference to conformity with "commitments made at the World Summit for Children and in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child." The Chair indicated that he would report back with a compromise text reflecting delegates' views.

On **23(a)bis** (education on population and health issues), consultations focused primarily on four issues: the scope of such education; the role of parents; the levels at which such education should be included; and protection of adolescents from unsafe abortion. On the scope of such education, GHANA's proposal to specify "sexual and" reproductive health education was supported by the EU, INDIA, MEXICO, CUBA, JAPAN, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, NAMIBIA, BOLIVIA, the US, BOTSWANA, URUGUAY, BRAZIL, the PHILIPPINES, PANAMA, NICARAGUA, CHILE, PARAGUAY, NIGERIA, SWITZERLAND and PERU. The delegations of SUDAN, LIBYA, MOROCCO, ALGERIA, EGYPT, POLAND, the HOLY SEE, MALAYSIA, IRAN, SYRIA and PAKISTAN objected and preferred to adhere to POA paragraph 11.9 (education about population issues). On the role of parents, delegates differed on whether to employ language from paragraph 11.9 referring to their "rights and responsibilities" (EGYPT, YEMEN, SUDAN, the HOLY SEE, ALGERIA, LIBYA, IRAN and GUATEMALA), mention their "active participation" (PERU and INDIA) or recommend their "active involvement and participation" (the US, NORWAY, BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA, BRAZIL, JAPAN and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION). On the levels at

which education should be included, the EU, supported by PANAMA, JAPAN, PAKISTAN and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, proposed to specify "at all appropriate levels of formal and non-formal schooling." GHANA's proposal to include the objective of protecting adolescents from "unsafe abortion" was supported by NORWAY, BRAZIL, PANAMA, BOLIVIA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and opposed by SUDAN, SENEGAL, POLAND, PAKISTAN, MOROCCO and the HOLY SEE.

Following requests by a number of delegations, Chair Chowdhury produced a "package" text containing compromise language for **13(a)**, **23(a)bis** and paragraphs **52(a)**, **(e)** and **(f)** on adolescent SRH. Key elements of the package consisted of: meeting the needs of youth "with the active support, guidance and participation, as appropriate, of parents, families, communities, NGOs and the private sector" in 13(a); including "at all levels, as appropriate, of formal and non-formal schooling, education about population and health issues, including sexual and reproductive health issues" and ensuring "the active participation of parents" in 23(a)bis; and ensuring adolescents' access to information, counseling and health services "with due respect for the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents" in 52(e).

SUDAN, LIBYA and ARGENTINA said compromise on these paragraphs should be linked with agreement on 45(e) on abortion. SUDAN, with LIBYA and MOROCCO, preferred adhering to Cairo language in 13(a) by stating that youth should be "actively," rather than "fully" involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and plans. SWITZERLAND noted that the POA "recognizes," rather than has "due respect for" the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents. MOROCCO recommended inverting the introductory clause of 23(a)bis to include, "as appropriate, at all levels" of formal and non-formal schooling, education about population and health issues, and, with LIBYA, objected to including "sexual and" reproductive health issues in such education. A number of delegates said they needed to receive the text in official UN languages, have more time to review the package of compromise text, and consult with their superiors. Although many indicated difficulty with portions of the text, most delegates expressed their willingness to join the emerging consensus. Chair Chowdhury noted that delegates required more time to consider the package and that not all delegations were happy with all of the text, but stressed that if all delegations were unhappy, this indicated that a good consensus had been achieved. He appealed to delegates to demonstrate the same spirit of compromise with the remaining two paragraphs on abortion and rights, and drew consultations to a close at 11:30 pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Frustrations due to painfully slow progress in the informal consultations earlier in the day Wednesday appeared to ease as the night wore on and delegates amiably and almost unanimously accommodated the Chair's package compromise text on plans to meet young people's needs, education, and adolescent SRH. Despite the fact that some delegates saw this as an encouraging sign that consensus could finally be reached Thursday on these divisive paragraphs, others speculated on the unsavory prospect of hostage-taking through insistence on still further refinement of delicate language and on linking this fragile consensus to agreement on the text on abortion, which delegates anticipate will be even more difficult to achieve.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Approximately 55 high-level officials are expected to deliver statements on the overall review and appraisal of POA implementation in morning, afternoon and evening Plenary sessions in the General Assembly Hall.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW will meet in morning and afternoon sessions in Conference Room 2 to hear statements from representatives of UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: Informal consultations are expected to continue in Conference Room 3 at 10:00 am to discuss the Chair's package text and paragraphs 45(e) on abortion and 1 on rights.