



**INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POPULATION**

**IUSSP – UIESP**

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**THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**APRIL 3, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, IUSSP, with a membership of 1,800 population specialists in over 120 countries, has a long tradition of fostering multidisciplinary research at the international level on a wide array of population issues. Its scientific studies have increased understanding about the causes of population dynamics and their impact at the individual, household, national and international levels. The Union also seeks to “stimulate interest in demographic matters among governments, national and international organisations, scientific bodies and the general public.”

In the area of reproductive health, studies sponsored by IUSSP have corroborated the existence of major unmet needs, particularly with regard to family planning services; antenatal and post-natal health services for mothers and children; services to control and prevent sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; and services that provide information and education to individuals on how to safeguard their sexual and reproductive health. The need for these services is particularly acute in the least developed countries, many of which are already highly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In formulating programmes to address these needs, it is necessary to take into account the local context and especially cultural factors shaping a population’s view on reproductive health issues. Recent IUSSP work provides valuable insights into the importance of the cultural factors and the gender dimension for reproductive processes.

Clearly, a key issue of concern for governments and the international community is the continuing spread of the HIV epidemic. IUSSP’s work in this area has contributed to our ability to understand and model the dynamics of the epidemic. By supporting basic research, the IUSSP has been a catalyst in developing the methods and approaches that have proven successful in assessing the demographic and social impact of HIV/AIDS. Through its Committee on Reproductive Health, the IUSSP is planning work on the assessment of interventions to prevent the further spread of the disease. Through its Committee on Emerging Health Threats, an analysis of the interactions between HIV infection and other diseases is being pursued. These activities contribute to establish the scientific basis for

Mr. Chairman, given the long-term reduction of mortality at the world level, the number of children that couples have is the key determinant of global population trends. Although that number has been falling in the majority of countries, it is still well above the level needed to ensure population stabilization at the world level. Population specialists agree that over the next 25 years 2 billion people will be added to the world population even if fertility continues to fall in the developing world. Ensuring that couples have the means of having the children they want and only the children they want is a goal that should continue to have priority. Individuals and society, both benefit when that goal is achieved.

Providing the reproductive health services needed for the growing number of persons in the reproductive ages certainly poses a challenge, especially in the least developed countries where other health issues have to be addressed as well. Research suggests that investments on ways to satisfy the need for information, education and services of the younger cohorts entering the reproductive ages are likely to yield the best dividends in the long run. Programmes focusing on the needs of adolescents and young adults are also well-suited to promote gender equity by addressing the reproductive health needs of both men and women.

Mr. Chairman, the Union is also addressing population trends that are likely to become more important in the years ahead. Below-replacement fertility and population aging in developed countries and in a growing number of developing countries is changing the age structures of those societies in directions that have major implications for social security and health systems. Studies sponsored by the Union assess the implications of these changes and provide a basis for assessing policy options.

Similarly, the growing urbanization of the world has already had important impacts on social and demographic trends, and the expected growth of the urban population, particularly in developing countries, poses both challenges and opportunities for development. Current activities of the Union are focusing on this key transformation of the world population.

Lastly, concerned about the interrelations between economic development and population processes, the Union has just established a Committee on Poverty to consider the development experiences over the past thirty years in order to identify economic and demographic approaches that can best lead to improved human welfare.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, IUSSP wishes to commend the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund for the rich and thorough documentation presented to this Commission on the special theme of this session. The research work presented here certainly lays a solid basis for the assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD.