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The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD): Context and Characteristics
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Introduction

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD): What is it?

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development is the fifth global population conference, organized under the auspices of the United Nations. At the same time it is the third Intergovernmental World Population Conference. The first conference, held in **Rome in 1954** at IUSSP's initiative and organized jointly and on equal footing by IUSSP and the United Nations promoted the establishment of statistical and demographic systems, the collection of data for population analysis and economic and technical assistance to developing countries to establish accurate and comprehensive data bases. The second conference, also under the joint auspices of IUSSP and the United Nations took place in **Belgrade in 1965** and for the first time focused on topics such as fertility and family planning—themes which before had not been discussed systematically at United Nations meetings. An important conclusion of this conference was that fertility is a significant factor in socio-economic development.

The first Intergovernmental World Population Conference took place in **Bucharest in 1974**. At that conference, the World Population Plan of Action was accepted. The explicit aim of this Plan is to help co-ordinate population trends and the trends of economic and social development. The second Intergovernmental World Population Conference was organized in **Mexico City in 1984**. The conference reaffirmed and expanded the World Population Programme of Action. It emphasized that social and economic development is a central factor in the solution of population and interrelated problems and that population factors are very important in development plans and strategies and have a major impact on the attainment of development objectives.

The third Intergovernmental World Population Conference, again organized by UNFPA and the UN Population Division, took place in **Cairo in September 1994**. All together, 177 countries and the European Union were officially represented at the Conference. Palestine and associate members of UN the regional commissions had observers at the Conference. In addition there were representatives from a host of United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations.

The theme of the conference was population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The Conference sought to forge a new international consensus recognizing that population concerns are at the heart of all political, social, economic and environmental issues and to adopt a Programme of action for effectively implementing the decisions resulting from this consensus. The ICPD, although extensively prepared from a scientific view, does not intend to shed more scientific light on demographic themes but to extract a political commitment from sovereign states that specific actions should be taken to influence population change.

To prepare this conference **three Preparatory Committee Meetings of Governments** had been convened at United Nations Headquarters. Second, **five Regional Intergovernmental Conferences** have taken place in Africa, the Arab World, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific. These regional conferences adopted a range of recommendations, geared specifically to the needs of each region. Third, **six Expert Group Meetings** were convened to examine clusters of issues that were considered by the first Preparatory Committee and endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, to be of the highest priority. These expert group meetings dealt with the following themes:

1. Population growth, changes in demographic structure, including ageing of population and the regional diversity of such changes.
2. Population policies and programmes, with emphasis on the mobilization of resources for developing countries at both international and national levels.

3. The interrelationships between population, development, environment and related matters.
4. Changes in the distribution of population both internal and international migration.
5. Linkages between enhancing the roles and socio-economic status of women and population dynamics.
6. Family planning programmes, health and family well-being.

The organization of the Cairo Conference calls into mind the picture of an airplane. An airplane, to fly, needs two wings. The conference had two wings. One wing was the political conference with official member delegates from most of the UN member countries. The other wing represented the NGO Forum. Letting one's imagination roam a bit beyond the regular construct of a plane one could say that the 'official' wing was more directly connected to the pilot, the United Nations system. On the other hand NGO's have become so important that they may be represented as more directly connected with the rudder and the rear wings. The plane will not fly without a pilot but she can never give direction without the rudder.

Conference facilities provided by the Egyptian host country were generally of high quality. Both the Political Conference and the NGO Forum took place in a large compound reserved for important conferences and meetings. Although both meeting places were at a short distance from each other there was enough physical separation to make several NGO's feel they were somehow disconnected from the political conference.

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development: IUSSP's Role

To clarify the role of IUSSP it is sufficient to look at the name of the organization: **INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POPULATION**. It is an organization which is dedicated to **POPULATION**. Many other organizations are dedicated to various aspects of population dynamics. Some of these promote a particular point of view on specific population issues such as the interrelations between population and the environment, the advantages and disadvantages of international migration, the impact of urban population dynamics on economic development. Some of them may even actively lobby in favour of concrete population policies such as policies to reduce rapid population growth, policies to restrict or to liberalize abortion, policies to stimulate or to discourage international migration.

IUSSP, in contrast, does not hold any particular points of view on population issues, nor does it lobby on behalf of specific population policies. However it holds to a crucial perspective on population: the **SCIENTIFIC STUDY** of population. This requires a certain detachment which is sometimes misunderstood by persons, faced with the realities of population problems in daily life, as a disinterest in practical problem solving. However the scientific perspective is the best guarantee that any population problem can be analyzed within a framework which will supply, test and improve the necessary data to know population issues in all their dimensions, which will provide the theoretical underpinnings to draw correct inferences about the interrelations between demographic and other variables and which will scrutinize the rational and evaluate the possible impact of population policies and programmes. IUSSP's four basic objectives reflect eminently its basic scientific orientation (see first box on page 6).

IUSSP as such is not a research organization, nor is it an institutionalized training outfit. It is a **UNION** of professionals who are interested in the Scientific Study of Population. Their interest comes through a variety of paths. Many members teach and do research in the academic context. Others work within the context of government, of international institutions or of the private profit and non-profit sector. Other members are not directly engaged in research or training but have a direct need for scientific insights in population issues for policy making or for the conduct of population programmes. IUSSP furthermore organizes these professionals in a Union which spans the world. It is an **INTERNATIONAL** Union. Currently the Union has about 2,000 members with a consistent upward trend in the share of members from developing countries.

The four basic objectives of IUSSP:

- to encourage research into demographic issues and problems world-wide;
- to stimulate interest in population questions among governments, international and national organizations, the scientific community and the general public;
- to foster exchanges between population specialists and those in related disciplines;
- to disseminate scientific knowledge on population as widely as possible.

IUSSP's contributions to ICPD can be subdivided into two broad groups. On the one hand there are IUSSP's ongoing contributions in the broad context of its own activities to promote the professional interests of its members and the advance of the scientific study of population. IUSSP's contributions in the broad context of its own activities are multiple and take on a diversity of forms through the activities of its members, its international conferences and scientific committees and working groups. The Scientific Committees and Working Groups are the principal way in which the scientific programme of IUSSP is implemented. Scientific Committees are active in well defined fields of research whereas the Working Groups are often established in newer areas in which the Council of IUSSP thinks further development and definitions of scientific issues are required. (for more detailed information see **IUSSP Contributions to the International Conference on Population and Development**, monograph 1 in the series, IUSSP Policy and Research Papers).

Topics of Policy and Research Papers

1. Contributions of the IUSSP to the International Conference on Population and Development
2. Population and Deforestation in the Humid Tropics
3. Health and Mortality Trends among Elderly Populations
4. Toward a more Effective Policy Response to AIDS
5. Women's Roles and Demographic Change in Sub-Saharan Africa
6. Evaluation of the Impact of Health Interventions
7. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Context and Characteristics

On the other hand there are IUSSP's special contributions, directly linked to the Cairo Conference. This started with a one day session, set especially aside at the last international conference of IUSSP at Montreal in August 1993, for the discussion of the results of the UN Expert Group Meetings in preparation of the Cairo Conference. Furthermore IUSSP organized workshops in collaboration with the governments of Germany and Belgium in preparation of the Cairo Conference. IUSSP, as one of the most important NGO's on the population scene, had a strong presence at the Conference through its observers at the Political Conference and at the NGO Forum and through its direct participation in the NGO Forum.

IUSSP's presence at the ICPD evidently is guided by two major preoccupations: informing its members about the Conference which is bound to affect their professional life in many ways and assessing the Conference from the scientific point of view. These two major preoccupations of course reflect the four previously mentioned basic objectives of IUSSP. These objectives evidently stimulate several questions of fundamental interest to IUSSP:

1. Its deep interest in the fostering of population research makes IUSSP look at the relevance of the conference for its members and for scientific population research. What was the context of the Conference? What were the major characteristics of the Conference? How well are the recommendations of the Conference founded in solid knowledge? What are the implications of the Conference for future research and training?
2. The ICPD Conference with its main focus on population and development evidently is a magnificent opportunity to stimulate interest in population questions among governments, international and national organizations, the scientific community and the general public. How does IUSSP contribute to these goals within the framework of the Conference and its aftermath? What characteristics of the Conference should IUSSP look at specifically? Are governments more willing to ground their policies and programmes in scientific considerations?
3. This Conference with its multidimensional perspective on population dynamics requires as an important ingredient multidisciplinary perspectives to enlighten governments in their decision making processes and the promotion of exchanges between population specialists and those in related disciplines. Are these multidisciplinary perspectives present in the discussions at and characteristics of the Conference? Are they reflected in the recommendations of the Conference? Does the Conference stimulate multidisciplinary approaches in population research?
4. In the preparation, the actual conduct and the aftermath of the Conference, its organizers are very much interested in publicity about the conference and the dissemination of its results. How can IUSSP contribute to a balanced dissemination of its scientific perspectives on the Conference? How well can IUSSP contribute in the dissemination of scientific knowledge for the execution of the recommendations of the Conference?

Box 1 - IUSSP Delegation at ICPD

Roderic Beaujot (Canada), Ashish Bose (India), John Caldwell (Australia/IUSSP President), Pat Caldwell (Australia), Jose Alberto de Carvalho (Brazil/IUSSP Vice-President), Mercedes B. Concepcion (Philippines/IUSSP Honorary President), Paul Demeny (USA), Sally Findley (USA), Allan G. Hill (United Kingdom/IUSSP Secretary General), Thomas Homer Dixon (Canada), Mukanda-Bantu Kalasa (Zaire), Karol Krotki (Canada), Jacques Légaré (Canada/IUSSP Council Member), Massimo Livi Bacci (Italy/IUSSP Honorary President), Louis Lohlé-Tart (Belgium), Sarah Loza (Egypt), Mumpasi Lututala (Zaire), Carla Makhoul Obermeyer (Lebanon), Walter Mertens (Belgium), Marvellous Mhloyi (Zimbabwe), B.D. Moussa Elkadhum (Comores), Ngondo a Pitshandenge (Zaire), Emmanuel Ngwe (Cameroon), Samuel Preston (USA), Julieta Quilodran (Mexico), Hoda Rashad (Egypt), Bruno Remiche, (Belgium/IUSSP Executive Secretary), Anatole Romaniuc (Canada), Michael Shenstone (Canada), Fatumata Sow (Burkina Faso), Simone St-Germain-Roy (Canada), Awa Thiongane (Senegal), Huda Zurayk (Lebanon /IUSSP Council Member).

In trying to answer some of these questions IUSSP is stimulating several activities. One is the preparation of this monograph on the Cairo Population Conference as another one in its Policy and Research Papers Series. The monograph takes on the double role of reporter and of assessor: of reporter on ICPD towards IUSSP members and others with a solid interest in population and of assessor of ICPD in terms of IUSSP's own objectives and interests. In reporting on the Conference the monograph will especially focus on the implications of the Conference for IUSSP's own agenda and the work of IUSSP's members. In assessing the Conference it will scrutinize the goals of the Conference and exploration opportunities where the Union, within its own mandate, can give appropriate assistance to the implementation of the objectives of the Conference. In fulfilling these tasks the monograph will contain critical questions and observations which may not please everyone involved in ICPD. However they are given in a spirit of constructive collaboration. It should be emphasized that the monograph is based on the work of a group of IUSSP members who attended the Conference and that the monograph has been finalized likewise by one of its members. It should be noted though that this monograph does not represent in any formal and official way the view of IUSSP.

As has been stressed the fundamental perspective of IUSSP is a scientific one. However it is aware that a conference of the nature of ICPD is not primarily a scientific congress but a world encounter to flush out important policy issues. It is fully cognizant of the fact that policy issues are never exclusively or even primarily decided on pure scientific criteria. Still the customary scientific perspective of IUSSP on these issues will allow consideration of the causes of the problems and the likely consequences of recommended policies in greater depth and with more rigour.

IUSSP, in addition to this monograph, is also stimulating the establishment of new Scientific Committees and Working Groups and the strengthening of previously existing ones to screen the implications of the Conference for research, training and professional development and to support, wherever appropriate, the Conference's recommendations for research and training. Four new committees have recently been set up: committee on reproductive health, committee on gender and population, committee on AIDS and committee on fertility and family planning. Their topics clearly reflect concerns which belong to the core of ICPD's interests.

Scientific Committees and Working Groups of IUSSP

- Committee on Anthropological Demography
- Committee on Economic Demography
- Committee on Fertility and Family Planning
- Committee on Gender and Population
- Committee on Historical Demography
- Committee on Reproductive Health
- Committee on AIDS
- Committee on South-North Migration
- Working Group on Biodemography
- Working Group on UN District-Level Census Analysis
- Working Group on Demographic Dictionary

The Union is also collaborating with others to promote the same goals through special meetings and other activities. For example, IUSSP together with the Laboratory of Economic and Social Demography of the University of Geneva and the Directorate of the Cooperation in Development and Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss government organized a meeting, dedicated to the assessment of the ICPD Programme of Action. At that same meeting IUSSP was asked to comment on a publication on the Cairo Conference which is being prepared by the University of Geneva in collaboration with the Center for our Common Future, also located in Geneva.

The Political Conference: General Overview

The political conference consisted basically of two forums: the **Plenary Session** and the **Main Commission**. In addition there was a **Series of Special Lectures and Panel Discussions**. Prominent persons had been invited for these lectures by UNFPA, the main organizer of the Conference (see Box 4). They must be distinguished from IUSSP's Distinguished Lecture Series on Population and Development and which took place within the framework of the NGO Forum (see Box 3).

In the **Plenary Session** the official country representatives had the opportunity to state their country's position on population issues and to present what measures had been taken in the population field. Each day there were about fifty speakers. Protocol aspects, probably inevitable, tended to protract the time. Ministers and other dignitaries had to be escorted by the protocol chief and this itself took a lot of time. Then every delegate spent some time thanking UN, UNFPA and the host country which took even more time.

Form rather than content was important. For many countries it was an opportunity for image building and self glorification. Often though it was also an occasion for the distribution of a document with a good overview of the country's population situation and policies. Some country representatives used or rather misused this occasion to bring up burning political issues and to wander into areas not directly or only scantily linked to the major themes of the Conference.

The discussions around the Programme of Action in the **Main Committee** were the life blood of the conference. It was at these meetings that often deep disagreements came into the open. To solve these, special ad hoc commissions were continuously established to search for wordings and formulations acceptable by all parties. The different chairmen of the Main Committee made admirable efforts to suggest compromises and to have them accepted by the delegates.

The World Programme of Action, the main document which was discussed at the Conference, consists of three parts. **Part One** is short and contains two chapters: the preamble and an overview of the basic principles for the Programme of Action. **Part Two** is the longest (almost 100 pages) and contains eight chapters. Three of these chapters deal with three important sets of interrelations of population: with sustained development; with gender equality and empowerment of women; and with the family. The five following chapters are dedicated to the key population sectors: population growth and structure; reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning; health and mortality; population distribution, urbanization and internal migration; and finally international migration. **Part Three** discusses the means of implementation and has seven chapters dealing with IEC programmes, capacity building, technology and research, national action, international cooperation, the role of NGO's and recommendations for follow-up of the World Programme of Action.

Box 2 - Languages, Terminology, Words, Word Order and Letters

Although English was by far the predominant language at the conference, discussions - as is the custom - could take place in any one of the official languages of the UN. Also the Draft Programme of Action had been published in those languages before the start of the Conference. Ultimately all changes in that document have to be published in these languages. Understandingly for such a complex document as the Programme of Action there were inconsistencies between the multiple translations, which sometimes added more fuel to the discussions.

An example of such an inter-language inconsistency was in connection with the inheritance rights of women. In the version of the Programme of Action prepared for the Conference the term 'equal' had been changed into 'equitable' to accommodate concerns of certain countries with Islam as the dominant religion. However the Arab text still contained the equivalent of 'equal' and thus elicited the intervention of several Moslem countries. The terminology 'various concepts of the family' and 'various forms of the family' to many persons may not sound so different. However the replacement of 'concepts' by 'forms' in the final version of the Programme of Action indicated a shift from a more liberal to a more traditional definition of the family. Several times the Programme of Action makes reference to 'indigenous people[s]' with the 's' bracketed. In the

final version the singular form was retained because some delegates felt that the plural form could be understood as if indigenous peoples should be recognized as separate autonomous entities.

In some cases an exegetic mind is required to understand the rationale of certain changes as for example in the replacement of 'methods of fertility regulation of their choice' by 'methods of their choice for regulation of fertility'. Only someone with intimate knowledge about the abortion debate at the Conference will understand the rationale.

And then there are cases in which the debate about terminology gives the impression of altercations among children. An example in point was the discussion about whether the use of entertainment programmes as a means to encourage public discussion of topics related to the implementation of the Programme of Action should be greater, appropriate, better, effective or with greater effectiveness. Delegates finally agreed on 'greater and effective'.

The Programme of Action had been discussed in detail during the preparatory period and thus already had gone through several revisions. The version submitted to the Political Conference however contained many brackets around specific terminology, sentences and even complete paragraphs or single letters to indicate reservations and disagreements. The brackets had been put there by a number of countries which had participated in the preparatory process. At the Conference among a number of NGO representatives this called into existence an informal movement of 'bracket busters'.

The Programme of Action is an action-oriented document. It addresses key population issues and their interrelationships with sustained economic growth, sustainable development and gender equality in a 20-year time frame. It also includes the means of implementation, commitments and follow-up agreed to at the Cairo Conference.

The Programme of Action was approved unanimously by all the official delegations. Contrary to expectations, the Holy See which at previous World Population Conferences 'could not find its way to join the consensus, because of some fundamental reservations', now saw it possible, 'in some way to join the consensus, even in an incomplete, or partial manner'. It should be noted though that this unanimity was obtained with serious reservations regarding several items of the document from the part of the Holy See and several Islamic and Latin American countries.

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development: NGO Forum

NGO's in recent years have expanded their influence in shaping international opinions on development, human rights, women, the environment and many other issues. Increasingly they are also involved in the implementation of action programmes around these issues. Their growing importance in recent years has been recognized by a much more formalized presence of NGO's at international meetings.

The World Population Conference is no exception to this trend. A substantial number of NGO's, covering areas directly or indirectly related to population, participated in the Preparatory Meetings and in the Forum: from women's movements to right-to-life movements, from movements with a primary concern with the environment to those promoting the welfare of migrants, from family planning and women's health service providers to population control advocates, from organizations with a primary scientific interest to those who look at scientific insights as a mere obstacle to be overcome by passion.

As already pointed out IUSSP had a strong presence at the Cairo Population Conference. IUSSP which has Category II NGO consultative status with UN-ECOSOC has also a long tradition of autonomous collaboration with international agencies. It had a multi-person booth at the NGO forum for the distribution of a wide array of material on the Union. It had a team of observers at the Conference which covered practically all activities at the Conference. It also organized the **Distinguished Lecture Series on Population and Development** in Cairo for the benefit of the Conference participants (see Box 3).

Box 3: IUSSP Distinguished Lecture Series on Population and Development

The interest of IUSSP as the foremost NGO with a primary scientific interest in population is clearly demonstrated by the organization of the Distinguished Lecture Series on Population and Development for the benefit of the participants of the Cairo Conference. All together there were seven lectures by recognized population experts in their field. Each lecture was followed by an open debate. The topics of the lectures had been selected for their relevance to the main themes of the conference and because of their importance to understand current population dynamics in their interrelations with social, economic and political problems. The lectures also contain ample attention to policy implications.

The lectures, which had been published by IUSSP in anticipation were dedicated to the following topics (in alphabetic order of author):

The Course and Causes of Fertility Decline (John Caldwell)
Population and Development (Paul Demeny)
Population and Conflict (Thomas Homer-Dixon)
Poverty and Population (Massimo Livi Bacci)
Status of Women, Population and Development (Marvellous Mhloyi)
Population and Environment. From Rio to Cairo (Samuel Preston)
Population and Health (Huda Zurayk).

Rather than summarizing these lectures which by themselves are already concise overviews of the current status of the lecture theme, some of the more striking features of the lectures are highlighted in the following points:

The lectures recall the audience that some perspectives which originated at the dawn of scientific attention to population phenomena now received renewed attention at the Cairo Conference. The lecture on population and the environment emphasizes that the current interest in this topic shows that 'anxiety about population growth has returned to its Malthusian origin' through its attention to land scarcity and soil degradation in developing countries as a constraint on agricultural development. The lecture on poverty and population starts with the observation, already made by Malthus, that differential mortality among children is a social class phenomenon.

The lectures introduce population factors in combination with others to emphasize the complexity of population problems. The lecture on population and conflict distinguishes three types of environmental scarcity which can be the root cause of serious conflicts: decrease in supply caused by decrease in the quantity and quality of a resource, increases in demand caused by population growth and changing consumption patterns and structural scarcity reflecting unequal access to resources. The lecture on population and health, while recognizing the importance of programmes promoting growth monitoring, oral rehydration therapy, food supplementation and others, observes that this was done with 'the neglect of underlying societal factors, particularly as they relate to the conditions of women that influence behaviours and the proper utilization of technologies'.

The lectures direct attention to new and sometimes unexpected findings and insights as indicated by the following statement from the lecture on population and the environment: 'Even if population growth were playing a minor role in producing a particular problem, population policy may provide one of the most cost-effective ways of addressing it'. The lecture on poverty and population shows how simple correlations between population and economic growth cannot result in unambiguous conclusions because the correlation, depending on the timing of the demographic transitions, may be negative or positive. The lecture on the course and causes of fertility decline states that 'within a generation it is likely that there will be no country in the world which has not experienced some fertility decline'. The lecture on status of women and population mentions the recent development in some cultures of older men aggressively seducing young women under the assumption that these women are free of HIV.

The lectures show that many lacks continue to exist in the scientific study of population. The lecture on the course and causes of fertility decline illustrates this by pointing out that those in favour of explaining the decline in fertility through diffusion processes do not necessarily agree about what exactly was diffused: the realization that children are an economic advantage, the recognition that it was physically and morally possible to practice fertility control, or the knowledge of birth control techniques.

The lectures eschew simple-minded conclusions which pander to the simplistic preferences of some action groups. The lecture on status of women and population which deals exhaustively with many real instances of gender bias in the provision of health and other services for girls and women states that 'gender inequality should not assume lack of passion, nor consistently divergent interests between males and females...'

Lectures, such as the one on population and development remind the audience that it is 'IUSSP's comparative advantage, indeed its duty to probe into issues not yet intellectually settled, even if, perhaps because politically sensitive or outright taboo'. Therefore they introduced themes which in their view did not receive sufficient attention at the World Population Conferences. The lecture on population and development reminded Conference participants that the Bucharest Conference 'failed to apply its own cardinal rule: 'integrate population and development'. The same lecture also criticized the US position at the Mexico Conference for stating the nonsense that 'population growth is, by itself a neutral phenomenon'. The lecture observes that the integration of population and development, in spite of all the rhetoric, is still a long way off and that the focus on population and sustainable development hides assumptions and contradictions which have not been seriously faced. The lecture also criticizes the current tendency to justify family planning programmes as serving exclusively the private needs of their clients.

The increasing importance of NGO's on the international scene has not been without controversy. On balance their role is undoubtedly positive. Three important benefits follow from their participation at international meetings and from their involvement in activities related to the concerns of such international meetings. It enables international organizations to be much closer to grass roots thinking. It gives international organizations access to a wide array of expertise and experiences. Finally, by enlisting NGO's as their collaborators, it makes it much easier for international organizations to execute their programmes. IUSSP for example either directly or indirectly through its members has been an important source for clear-headed thinking on population issues.

Its promotion of research topics, close to the interest of international population agencies has broadened substantially our insights from the rationale of population policies to ways how to integrate population into development, from family planning evaluation to the role of women in health and migration, from historic to anthropological perspectives. The Distinguished Lecture Series on Population and Development, described in Box 3, is a clear confirmation of the Union's contributions.

However it should be admitted that the increasing importance of NGO's also presents certain problems which are not always sufficiently recognized. Many NGO's normally arise from concerns with particular issues about which they have strong feelings. Three dangers follow from this situation. One is lack of focus on the main theme of the Conference. The second is that certain NGO's, in the eagerness to press their programmes, frequently promote points of view which are not sufficiently corroborated by detached scientific analysis. The third is a lack of democratic representation because only the most vocal opinions are present. Both benefits and dangers were very much visible at ICPD.

Lack of focus on the fundamental conference themes is a conspicuous failure among several NGO's. An example in case are the papers and statements around the theme of the environment. Papers presented by environmental NGO's range from topics close to population issues such as 'Demographic Processes, Development and Migratory Fluxes in the Mediterranean Basin' to topics well removed from the main focus of the conference such as 'Development of the Lives of Garbage Collectors and Environmental Improvements'. An example of the second weakness is the case of a particular NGO, which in its zeal to promote the reduction of urban population growth, confuses the reduction of city growth with the reduction in the absolute size of the city. Some NGO's present us with the third danger by advocating their position on abortion as the only morally valid one or by recommending simple-minded solutions as instantaneous zero population growth without considering the drawbacks of such a policy.

Sometimes benefits and weaknesses are simultaneously present. One example is the concern with 'environmental refugees'. The International Migrants Rights Watch Committee, which as its main, very praiseworthy objective has the promotion of the protection of international migrants through International Conventions, among its many recommendations directs attention to the so-called 'environmental refugees' defined as persons who have to leave permanently or semi-permanently their normal place of residence because of ecological disasters, some of them sudden, others slower but still threatening in the long run. The category of 'environmental refugees' is useful. However in their eagerness to direct attention to this hitherto unidentified category of refugees, some NGO's vastly exaggerate the certainty of various ecological disasters and the potential number of environmental refugees.

The Context of the Conference

The context in which the Conference took place, was in many ways different from that of the two previous World Population Conferences. It can be characterized by several features.

- The Conference took place at an important stage in the demographic transition. Mortality and fertility, although still very high in several countries have declined substantially. Many countries, as the Programme of Action underlines, have made substantial progress towards expanding access to reproductive health care, lowering birth rates and death rates.
- The Conference took place at a time when population policies and family planning programmes are widely accepted in developing countries. The Programme of Action observes that 'political commitment to population policies and family planning programmes by many governments has been strengthened'. (paragraph 1.8)
- It was the first world population conference in the post cold war period. The absence of cold war rhetoric freed the debates from a lot of ideological baggage which in the past had been the source of frequent unproductive altercations. Cold war rhetoric in the past had a way to get mixed up with North-South diatribes which were remarkably absent from this Conference and which enabled a much more positive dialogue on many development issues.
- The Conference reflects the growing importance of women's movements all over the world and their claims for gender equality and equity. Principle 4 of the Programme of Action (Chapter II) explicitly recognizes this

perspective by emphasizing that 'The human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights'.

- The conference took place at a time when interest in environmental issues and their interrelationships with population had become much more recognized.

Preamble 1.9 of the Programme of Action emphasizes that the Conference will: 'address the challenges and interrelationship between population and sustained growth in the context of sustainable development'.

Major Characteristics of the Conference

1. The world community comes together to discuss major population issues and is able to reach a compromise on a Programme of Action

Thirty years ago, the possibility that the over large majority of the countries of the world could come together to discuss population problems and policies, would have been regarded as preposterous. Now that we can look back at three world population conferences, this is not a dream any more but an accepted fact. Sure, there still are many important differences in how countries define population issues in general and how they view their own particular population problems. However the fact that they can come together in a major world meeting, the last in fact before this century closes, to discuss these problems and to agree on a document should be considered as one of the eventful happenings of the second half of the 20th century.

Admittedly the resulting Programme of Action is a compromise in which major points had to be muted or put in less precise language so that everyone could subscribe to it. Admittedly the Programme of Action often gives the impression of a utopian wish list, almost intent on bringing instantaneously heaven to earth. Admittedly the document does not have any direct legal obligations for its signatories. However the often arduous discussions and sharp exchanges are a vivid testimony that the delegates were very much aware that the document will influence during the next years population debates, programmes, legislation and policies all over the world.

Although the Conference tried to overcome narrow nationalistic perspectives, country representatives never omitted stressing national sovereignty. Part of the tensions which emerged during these debates indeed reflect the ever present tensions between national sovereignty and international solidarity which are a normal feature at such international conferences. The introduction to Chapter II of the Programme of Action on Principles explicitly recognizes national sovereignty by stating that 'The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action is the sovereign right of each country, consistent with national laws and the development priorities'. As Dr. Sadik from UNFPA said: 'the principle of sovereignty underlies the whole text and the language of the document is framed so as to be acceptable to the widest possible spectrum of approaches to population.'

However more so that in many other international documents it is emphasized that national sovereignty needs to be tempered internally by 'full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people' and internationally by 'conformity with universally recognized international human rights'.

2. While debates at the two previous World Population Conferences were affected by ideological considerations, at the Cairo Conference religion played an important role in the debates.

Population and development policies deal with issues deeply embedded in ideology and religion. This is of course reflected in the debates at the World Population Conferences. These debates sometimes get more attention than is warranted and they sometimes are at the origin of simplistic perceptions of the Conferences by outsiders.

At the Bucharest Conference the ideologies which tended to overshadow the ideological debates were very much associated with the existence of the so-called Marxist countries, the desire to establish a new World Order and the belief shared by many that development planning was essential to the development process. The idea that population dynamics was a set of passive variables and that problems caused by population dynamics could be taken care of by simple attention to development without giving explicit attention to population dynamics furthermore permeated many of the discussions at the Bucharest conference.

At the Mexico Conference the impact of ideology was probably less strong. In the intervening years the conviction that population dynamics played an important role in development dynamics and that it needs special consideration in development policies had gained more acceptance as evidenced by the fact that many countries had decided to introduce formal population policies since the Bucharest Conference. Still the Mexico Conference was not free from ideology. To a certain extent it was the same theme but in different clothes. Under the stimulation of the USA free markets ideology was promoted as another contraceptive pill. Free markets would adjust demographic behaviour without the need for special policies or programmes to overcome the negative spill-over effects of rapid population growth.

Box 4 - Funny moments at the Conference

It was not all the time serious faces at the Main Committee meetings. There were a few occasions for general laughter and tension relief, temporarily removing the participants from the routine seriousness of the daily meetings. Two such occasions stand out. When discussing the paragraph from the Programme of Action 'that there shall be no discrimination toward couples and individuals' some delegates including the delegate from the Holy See objected against the use of the term 'individuals'. One delegate retorted by observing that he did not understand why the Vatican would be against such wording since celibacy required very much an individual decision. On another occasion a delegate objected against the wording 'to promote expanded condom distribution' in a paragraph on the battle against sexually transmitted diseases because it could be understood as the promotion of used condoms.

Religion has never been absent from the World Population Conferences as can be expected for issues which are closely related to some of the most intimate aspects of human existence: life and death, sexuality and love, the place where a person lives and works. However there is no doubt that among the three World Population Conferences the Cairo Conference was the one where religion was most visible in its impact on the discussions of the Main Committee and in the changes introduced in the World Programme of Action. It sometimes permeated the discussions to such a degree, especially those on abortion, that some persons hypothesized that it was part of a devilish plot on the part of some developed countries to turn the attention away from burning development issues.

Three interrelated areas were especially the subject of religious controversy at the Cairo Conference: human reproduction, family structure and sexuality. The subject which dominated debates infused by religion was **abortion**. Undoubtedly the most talked about paragraph at the Conference was the famous paragraph 8.25 of chapter VIII of the Programme of Action. Two full versions of the paragraph were submitted to the Main Committee. The first version contained a multiplicity of brackets. The alternative version was fully bracketed. Behind the two submitted versions, already filled with many ambiguities, was the effort during the preparatory period of some countries to have the ICPD recognize safe abortion as an integral part of reproductive health programmes. The final version of the paragraph is a long way from such a recognition. It basically emphasizes the following points:

- abortion should never be promoted as a method of family planning and the need for abortion should be eliminated.
- all efforts should be made to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion.
- in circumstances where abortion is not against the law, it should be safe.

Nevertheless, as the previous statement shows, abortion has not been completely ruled out as a legitimate means of fertility regulation. Without explicitly mentioning abortion, certain paragraphs of the Programme of Action can be understood as accepting abortion as an admissible method of family planning for those countries where it is not illegal. For example paragraph 7.5, after recommending support for family planning methods also envisages the support 'for other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility, which are not against the law'.

How the **family** should be viewed and defined was at the root of another series of debates. One group adhered to the more traditional concept of the family: a unit based on marriage between woman and man and the basic social framework for the procreation and rearing of children. The other group was in favour of a broader concept of the family which did not necessarily imply formal marriage and for some neither the existence of a heterosexual couple.

One of the basic principles of Chapter II (principle 9) strongly emphasizes that the family is the basic unit of society. While the original version of this paragraph recognized more explicitly the existence of various concepts of the family, subsequent changes in the paragraph at the Conference toned down the scope and variety of family types. Then in the final version of the principle dealing with the right to education (principle 10) a sentence was

added that 'the responsibility for education of the children lies in the first place with the parents', thus further strengthening the traditional view of the family. Nevertheless the document recognizes the single parent household as one of the family forms which is growing in importance and which needs to receive more attention.

Paragraph 5.5 of Chapter V which in its original version, submitted to the Main Committee, states that 'governments should take effective action to eliminate all forms of coercion and discrimination in policies and practices related to marriage, other unions and the family' became the victim of these opposing viewpoints. Oddly enough this version dates from the Bucharest Conference and came 'unbracketed' to the Main Committee. It originally had been included at the insistence of many Caribbean and Latin American countries to give more official recognition to consensual unions which at that time were more widely spread in that part of the world. Now it encountered opposition from many Moslem countries and the Holy See which saw in it not only the acceptance of sexual relations outside the marriage bond but even the approval of homosexual unions.

Sexuality, already in the background of the two previous issues was the third major opportunity for religious controversy. Already during the preparatory phase the concept of sexual rights had not found strong support. Even the concept of sexual health, which admittedly within reservation brackets, could be found in several places of the document submitted to the Main Committee, was toned down and is now only mentioned in the context of reproductive health.

Three final observations need to be made on what can be seen as 'the revenge of God', as the title of a French book on the impact of late 20th-century religious revival on politics goes. First the religious controversies had the ambivalent consequence that they focused the attention of the mass media and the lay public on the Conference. It certainly gave much more publicity to the Cairo Conference than to the previous World Population Conferences. Excitement and even some panic rose immediately before the Conference because of strong opposition of some Moslem groups and because a very limited number of Moslem countries decided not to attend the Conference. Some of the international press, misleadingly as subsequent events have shown, hinted to the strong possibility of terrorist interventions and even the scene of a complete 'debacle' at the conference. As a consequence some individuals did cancel their travel arrangements.

Secondly, although religion was an important factor in the controversies at the Conference the fear of a religiously homogeneous block, especially of a Vatican-Islam front, systematically torpedoing crucial articles of the Programme of Action did not realize. There were many internal disagreements among various religious groups. Events showed that the assumption of a Vatican-Islam front was completely inappropriate. Many Moslem countries, including Iran, made a host of positive contributions to the conference. The Holy See, as already mentioned, saw it possible to subscribe to the consensus of the Conference.

Thirdly it is not necessary to look at these religious controversies as useless and even negative in their effect, as many in the population community tend to do. It is possible to look at them from a broader perspective. They reflect clearly held convictions among large proportions of the world population. It is better that these feelings come to the surface during an international conference such as this where there is a possibility to flush them out and to engage in a constructive dialogue, as ultimately happened at the Conference.

3. The Cairo Conference strongly emphasized the value of human beings and the need for population programmes to respect and safeguard the singularity of every human person.

The Cairo document, more clearly and more explicitly than the programmes of action resulting from the previous World Population Conferences puts emphasis on the human person as the central concern of population and development policies.

This comes very strongly through in several of the basic principles, listed in Chapter 2 of the Programme of Action:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (principle 1).
- Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development... People are the most important and valuable resource of any nation (principle 2).
- The right to development is a universal and inalienable right... the lack of development cannot be invoked to abridge internationally recognized human rights (principle 3).

This concern with the human person is also reflected in the Conference's recommendations in regard to population programmes. Several times in the document it is stressed that freedom of choice and absence of coercion in the matter of family planning and the full freedom to decide on the number of children and the manner of spacing is part of universally recognized human rights:

- It (ICPD) affirms the application of universally recognized human rights standards to all aspects of population programmes... (Preamble 1.18).
- Reproductive rights include the right to make decisions concerning reproduction, free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents (Paragraph 7.3).
- The objectives of the Programme of Action are: to help couples and individuals meet their reproductive goals in a framework that...respects the dignity of all persons and their right to choose the number, spacing and timing of the birth of their children (paragraph 7.14).

Family planning and reproductive health care programmes are specifically warned to make sure that they embody these principles and that a wide choice of family planning methods should be available without coercion:

- The objectives are: To enable and support responsible voluntary decisions about child-bearing and methods of family planning of their choice... (paragraph 7.5).
- The principle of informed choice is essential to the long term success of family planning programmes. Any form of coercion has no part to play (paragraph 7.12).
- Reproductive health-care programmes should provide the widest range of services without any form of coercion (Principle 8).
- The promotion of the responsible exercise of these rights for all people should be the fundamental basis for government- and community-supported policies and programmes in the area of reproductive health, including family planning (Paragraph 7.3).

This was also reflected in the removal of any positive reference to demographic targets from the original version of the Programme of Action and a very sceptical attitude toward the use of incentives or disincentives:

- In every society there are many social and economic incentives and disincentives that affect individual decisions about child-bearing and family size. Over the past century, many Governments have experimented with such schemes, including specific incentives and disincentives, in order to lower or raise fertility and in some cases these have been counterproductive. Government goals for family planning should be defined in terms of unmet needs for information and services. Demographic goals, while legitimately the subject of government strategies, should not be imposed on family planning providers in the form of targets or quotas for the recruitment of clients (paragraph 7.12).

The concern with the human aspect is also reflected in the many recommendations of the Programme of Action regarding the quality of reproductive and family planning services and the need to focus more directly on the clients in the design and execution of programmes.

4. The Cairo conference had a strong focus on women as reflected in its concern with gender equality and reproductive health.

Of all the World Population Conferences, the Cairo Conference was the one which undoubtedly put the strongest emphasis on women and this should be considered as one of the major characteristics of the Conference. This is especially manifested in its concern with **gender equality** and with the emphasis on **reproductive health**.

Principle 4 and Chapter IV are the major loci where **gender equality** is emphasized. Principle 4 states emphatically that the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. It makes a strong plea for the promotion of gender equality and equity, full participation of women in all spheres of social political and economic life and the eradication of all discrimination on grounds of sex.

Chapter IV, entitled 'Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women', then goes in great detail to assess the current situation for women and to make a wide series of recommendations for improvement in various sectors of women's life: education; policy and decision-making for sustainable development; ownership of land, income generating activities and many others. It also calls for creating conditions which increase the compatibility of mother-worker roles. It has a special section on the girl child, condemning boy-preference and all discrimination against girl children in nutrition, health care and others. The chapter has also a special section on male responsibilities to foster equality and equity within the household and in public life.

Box 5 - What is reproductive health?

The definition of reproductive health remains controversial. This was reflected in the discussion in the Main Committee which gave rise to the following definition of reproductive health:

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.

Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in these last conditions are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant, reproductive health is defined as the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Programme of Action very emphatically states that it does not create any new international human rights. However one could affirm that the emphasis on 'reproductive rights' and '**reproductive health**' which is present in many parts of the document introduces at least a new perspective on human rights. If not an enlargement, it certainly is an enrichment of international human rights.

The notion of reproductive health is first encountered in the Programme of Action in Principle 8 which emphasizes the need for equality of men and women 'in the universal access to health care services and reproductive health care programmes, including those related to reproductive health care, which includes family planning and sexual health.' Principle 4 states that, in addition to the promotion of gender equality and equity, 'ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes'.

Chapter VII is completely dedicated to reproductive rights and reproductive health. It makes an effort to define reproductive health (see Box 5). Basically it defines reproductive health as having the following characteristics:

- a state of well-being regarding the reproductive system which transcends the mere absence of disease
- the inclusion of sexual health implying satisfying and safe sex life
- a state which requires full availability of good family planning methods and access to appropriate health care services

5. Although the Conference has been criticized for its lack of attention to the development issues, the Programme of Action does not neglect the interrelations between population, development and environment.

Notwithstanding that the Conference is labelled 'International Conference on Population and Development', discussions about population-development-environment did not loom large in the Main Committee meetings. Several factors are responsible for the relative absence of discussions around this theme. First of all, as already observed, discussions resulting from religious positions on abortion, family and sexuality occupied an exorbitant proportion of time in the Main Committee debates. Secondly the demise of the cold war, as also mentioned before, has undermined official Marxist ideology which often hardened positions and stimulated unproductive controversies. Thirdly development theory has reached a stage where there is more unanimity on the basic preconditions and the necessary policies for development. Fourth the notion that population dynamics in many diverse ways interacts with development is much more broadly accepted.

Chapter III of the Programme of Action which is entirely dedicated to population and development belies the impression that the issue of population and development was absent from the basic concerns of the Conference. This chapter, entitled Interrelationships between Population, Sustained Economic Growth and Sustainable Development, it should be recognized, has many positive aspects. But it has also some weaknesses. Let us first review some of the positive aspects:

- The chapter makes an effort to look at the trinomium population-development-environment in an integrated fashion. The Programme of Action correctly states 'that macroeconomic and sectoral policies have rarely given due attention to population considerations (paragraph 3.3)'.
- Due emphasis is given to unsustainable consumption and production and the unsustainable use of natural resources as part of the policies to obtain sustainable development.
- The Programme of Action emphasizes that the achievement of sustainable development requires in addition to a favourable international economic climate, good governance, effective national policies and efficient national institutions (Paragraph 3.6).
- Several times it is affirmed that women are integral partners in the development process and that their advancement should be seen as both an important objective and means for development.
- The priority of investment in human resources for appropriate population and development strategies is correctly underlined. Furthermore 'high quality general and reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health care (paragraph 3.17)' are mentioned as an integral part of human capital investment.
- There is a clear awareness that even in the face of declining fertility 'large increases in population size are inevitable (paragraph 3.2)' and that development policies need to make the necessary arrangements to accommodate these population additions.

But there are also weaknesses:

- The analysis and the recommendations of Chapter 3 do not sufficiently reflect recent important changes in development thinking and the declining role of central planning. Nor is due attention given to the implications of the crisis of the welfare state for many of the recommendations which almost assume a utopian welfare regime, something no developing country can afford.
- The plea for sustainable development is devoid of any operational definition of sustainable development. This absence makes it far more difficult to assign concrete responsibilities to population policies.
- The strong recommendations to integrate population development and the environment are accompanied by a do-good list which covers practically all sectors of human endeavour and of public welfare policies. However very few pragmatic guidelines can be found to promote the integration of population and development in innovative ways.

6. Scientific insights and recommendations for scientific research are important aspects of the Programme of Action.

The Cairo Conference - as has been pointed out before - is not a conference dealing primarily with scientific research. However research and scientific conclusions cannot be disconnected from the Conference. They are present in two ways. First they are present in the background of the Conference in its many insights as derived from the scientific analysis of population data. The Conference's conception, preparation and organization cannot be imagined without the scientific contributions of demographers and other population specialists. Secondly it is present in the many recommendations, spread throughout the Programme of Action which deal specifically with research and training. Thirdly a special chapter (Chapter XII) is explicitly dedicated to research and training as an important component of the Programme of Action.

Scientific perspectives are very much present in the background of the Conference in its many insights derived from the scientific analysis of population data.

There are many instances in the Programme of Action where statements are based on scientific research:

- The assessment that rural-urban migration and migration between countries will remain strong (paragraph 1.1).
- The statement (paragraph 4.2) that female illiteracy is still quite important in several areas of the world and that it deeply affects social, economic and political conditions of women is the result of a broad array of studies.
- Paragraph 4.15 could not have been written without considerable recent research on boy preference and discrimination against girl children.
- Paragraph 5.1 which states that the patterns of family formation have been influenced by rapid demographic and socio-economic change obviously is based on research on changes in family composition.

The conference generally views population problems in a balanced way:

- Neither the discussions in the Main Committee, nor the resulting assessments and recommendations of the Programme of Action take a gloom and doom view of population problems. In fact an impression of prudent optimism is reflected in the document. Already in the preamble (paragraph 1.1) it is underlined that the world community has 'so many resources, so much knowledge and such powerful technologies at its disposal which if suitably redirected could foster sustained economic growth and sustainable development.' It is recognized that the world 'has undergone far-reaching changes in the past two decades.' and that 'significant progress in many fields important for human welfare has been made through national and international efforts (paragraph 1.2).' Many of these changes, the document continues, 'create important new opportunities for addressing population and development issues' and 'provide a basis for optimism about the successful implementation of the present Programme of Action... (paragraph 1.8)'.
- The Programme of Action takes a sober but not panicky view of the demographic future of the World Community. In its preamble (paragraph 1.4) it traces alternative paths for the world population for the near future and up to the middle of the next century. This ranges from 7.1 billion to 7.8 billion at the end of the next 20 years. By the year 2050 the projections range from 7.9 to 11.9 billion. At the same time it is stressed that it is very much up to choices by the world community, policy decisions and their implementation, which population paths will become reality.

Box 6 - A series of general lectures and panel discussions.

The speakers included Al Gore, Vice President of the USA, Brundland, the Prime Minister of Norway, Jane Fonda, film star, Nobel Laureate Professor Kendall and Dr. Swaminathan, the renowned agricultural specialist. It was to be expected that persons with so diverse a background would come up with very different ideas. Some of those were grounded in thorough scientific analysis. Others were less so. Kendall highlighted the gravity of the population problem and asserted that it was unrealistic to think that science and technology would solve the problem of population. As he put it: 'there are no magic bullets out there...The scientific community does not believe it and you should not believe it.' Dr. Swaminathan made a scientific presentation on food security and sustainable agricultural development, on the role of technology and population growth. He did not endorse the pessimistic projections of Lester Brown. He stated that food security should not be visualized only in terms of supply of food. It was also important to consider simultaneously the capacity of the people to purchase food which in turn depended on employment and income. Further the unit of analysis should be the household and it is important to ensure food security at the household level. He also warned about the dangers of jobless economic growth, economic growth which fails to absorb labour, because such economic growth is detrimental to food security.

Still the Programme of Action and other Conference activities are not completely devoid of simplistic views or ambivalence which often are present at conferences of the type of the Cairo Conference:

- There are sometimes statements in the Programme of Action which implicitly consider certain problems as completely proven by science. For example the Conference considers global climate change as confirmed fact.
- This ambivalence came through in the series of distinguished lectures officially sponsored by the Conference which are a mixture of scientific insights and missionary approaches (see Box 6).

Sometimes good intentions result in simple-minded accusations and critiques which reveal a lack of understanding of both the substance and history of demographic research.

- An example in case is the issue of demographic targets which as has already been mentioned were eliminated from the Programme of Action. The emphasis that family planning programmes should not be judged by demographic targets sometimes has the unfortunate consequence that demographers and demography through their population estimates and projections have been considered as primarily responsible for the use of targets. It is even sometimes hinted that coercion in family planning programmes can be directly linked to population projections. In this context some persons, in their laudable eagerness to criticize the misuse of demographic targets, have accused population scientists for the construction of population doom and gloom models. These models, according to these persons, were another reason for the appearance of coercive aspects in family planning programmes. Anyone who is familiar with the history of these models knows that most of them did not originate among demographers but on the contrary were often criticized by them.

Throughout the Programme of Action there are many recommendations for research to help in the Programme's implementation. For example:

- Paragraph 4.8 which recommends that specific procedures and indicators should be devised for gender-based analysis of development programmes and for assessing the impact of those programmes on women's social, economic and health status and access to resources.
- Paragraph 5.6 recommends that governments should undertake studies on family composition and structure, especially on the prevalence of one-person households and single-parent and multigenerational families.
- Paragraph 5.9 recommends the development of the capacity to monitor the impact of social and economic decisions on the well-being of families, on the status of women and on the ability of families to meet the basic needs of their members.
- Paragraph 7.16 recommends that all countries should assess the extent of national unmet need for good-quality family planning services.
- Paragraph 7.23 recommends to expand and upgrade formal and informal training in sexual and reproductive health care and family planning for all and to give more attention to qualitative measures in the evaluation of the performance of family planning programmes

Chapter XII of the Programme of Action, entitled 'Technology, Research and Development' gives explicit recommendations for research and training. Conspicuous aspects of the chapter are:

- Attention is directed to three areas of research: basic data collection, analysis and dissemination; reproductive health research; and social and economic research. Research should serve policies and programmes and as much as possible it should be comparative. Attention is also given to the creation of data-bases and the establishment of information networks.
- In line with one of the general orientations of the conference, it is emphasized that all research should include gender perspectives. Gender-specific information is needed to enhance and monitor the sensitivity of development policies and programmes. All data collection and analysis should desegregate data by gender so that the position and role of gender in social and demographic processes will be better known. The economic and demographic outcomes of gender inequality should receive full attention. The theme of violence toward women is recognized as an important research topic and studies on abuse and genital mutilation are recommended.
- In contraceptive research special emphasis is put on the development of a greater variety of barrier methods as a consequence of the emergence of AIDS and the recrudescence of many STDs. High priority should be given to the development of new methods for men and on factors inhibiting male inhibition in family planning programmes and on those involving males' responsibility in family planning programmes.

Conclusion

The Cairo Population Conference was the last opportunity for the world community to discuss major population issues before the end of the 20th century. All the nations present were able to work out a compromise which is reflected in the Programme of Action. The agreement strongly emphasizes the value of human beings and the need for population programmes to respect and safeguard the singularity of every person. Within this framework the Conference directed its attention to the role of women, the need for gender equality and equity and the need to place family planning with the broader realm of reproductive health.

The agreement also stresses the importance of the interrelations between population, development and environment and that societies have responsibilities to guarantee that their population dynamics do not affect development negatively and that their populations should not suffer from lack of attention to their population dynamics.

The world both in general and in the size and characteristics of its population has changed enormously since the first World Population Conference in Bucharest 1974, organized by UNFPA. It is bound to change even more by the time of the next World Population Conference, 20 years from now. Both the size and the quality of life of this World population by then is projected to be in the range of 7.1 to 7.8 billion people depending on several factors including the recommendations of ICPD. The degree to which these recommendations can be implemented depends in part on the available resources which will be spent on population programmes. The Programme of Action stresses the responsibilities of both developing and developed countries in providing the necessary resources (see Box 7).

At the same time the knowledge about population dynamics will continue to increase and improve. The conference could never have been conducted without the diverse contributions of population scientists in all corners of the world. The Programme of Action makes many recommendations to increase the quantity and quality of information and its use in preparing and evaluating recommended actions.

Box 7 - Financial resources needed for the implementation of the Programme of Action

UNFPA experts, on the base of past experience, have made an estimate of the financial resources needed for the implementation of the Programme of Action over the next twenty years in the developing countries and countries with economies in transition. They are summarized in the accompanying table.

The Programme of Action tentatively estimates that up to two thirds of the costs will be met by the countries themselves and the remainder one third from external resources. There will of course be a lot of variation in the need for external assistance depending on the particular level of development of each country.

Estimated costs of (in billions US\$)

	2000	2005	2010	2015
Implementation of programmes related to reproductive health, family planning, maternal health, prevention of STD plus basic actions to collect and analyze population data	\$17	\$18.5	\$20.5	\$21.7
Family planning component	\$10.2	\$11.5	\$12.6	\$13.8
Reproductive health component excluding delivery system costs included in the family planning component	\$5	\$5.4	\$5.7	\$6.1
Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases	\$1.3	\$1.4	\$1.5	\$1.5
Basic research, data and population and development policy analysis	\$0.5	\$0.2	\$0.7	\$0.3

IUSSP, primarily through its members and secondarily through its own activities plays an important role in this process. IUSSP, in playing this role, will be most efficient and productive when it maintains its autonomy. While looking for every opportunity to collaborate on the many research and training recommendations emanating from the Conference it also will continue to point to weaknesses and simplifications in policy recommendations resulting from inadequate data, from superficial theories which cannot stand the test of independent scientific analysis or from instances where preferences are automatically taken as reality.

Credits

- Papers and discussions of the two conferences organized by IUSSP with the German and Belgian governments can be found in:
 - Which Population Issues do matter in Cairo? Twelve International Demographers Pronounce Themselves in view of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD 1994). Materialien zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft. Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungswissenschaft. Wiesbaden 1994.
 - Population and Development. Colloquium organized by Mr. E. Derycke, Secretary of State for Development Cooperation in view of the Belgian Contribution to the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development. Brussels June 1994. Organized by ABOS-AGCD in cooperation with IUSSP. ABOS-AGCD. Brussels 1994.
- Box 3 is based on the report of Dr Ashish Bose on the UNFPA sponsored General Lectures. The sentence 'Form rather than content was important' in the 3rd paragraph of "The Political Conference: General Overview" is borrowed from his report.

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) is the foremost international professional association dedicated to the scientific study of population. Its four basic objectives are:

1. encouragement of research into demographic issues and problems world-wide;
2. stimulation of interest in population questions among governments, international and national organizations, the scientific community and the general public;
3. promotion of exchange between population specialists and those in related disciplines;
4. wide dissemination of scientific knowledge on population.

The Scientific Committees and Working Groups of IUSSP are the principal means of implementation of the scientific programme of the IUSSP. Generally they have a life of about four years. Scientific Committees are active in well-defined fields of research whereas the Working Groups are often established in newer areas in which the Council of IUSSP thinks further development and definition of scientific issues is required.

Additional information on the IUSSP and its scientific activities and publications are available on the website: www.iussp.org