



Check against Delivery

Second South Summit

South-South Cooperation: Population and Development

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Statement

by

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Mr. Chairman, Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates

It gives me great pleasure to address the Second South Summit of the Group of 77 Developing Countries and China.

This is an important and timely Summit and I would like to make five brief points, which I believe deserve attention. These points focus on development and cooperation.

My first point is that the United Nations system has been, is presently, and will continue to be strongly committed to national led development, national execution and ownership, and the strengthening of national capacity and self-reliance. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has been working to build national capacity for population and development, **which brings me to my second point.**

Population, economic growth and sustainable development are strongly interlinked. Population issues constitute a major part of the broader development agenda.

Issues such as the degree of respect for human rights; the status of women; the levels of poverty, and access to health and education; the movement of people—across borders as migrants and refugees or within as internally displaced persons; the density of a given population and the level and trends of urbanization; the age and sex structures and the ratio of dependents to workers; the prevalence of HIV and AIDS; and fertility and mortality rates, are all factors that have a profound effect on a nation's very prospects for development. These factors are in turn influenced by the development process.

Explicitly integrating population concerns into national development strategies, plans, decision-making and resource allocations will speed up the pace of development and contribute to the achievement of the rights of the population to a better quality of life.

This is one of the key messages of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Collecting and analyzing population data is one of the first steps to successful development policies and programmes. Population censuses and

surveys allow for the identification of development challenges and priorities and serve as a marker against which to measure progress. Most importantly, however, is the effective utilization of the data, as part of a conscious effort for good governance, for equity in development efforts and for clearer accountability. This is truly data for development.

Third, an enabling environment for development is also critical.

If nations are to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, then an enabling environment for equitable and sustainable economic growth must be created.

Domestic funding provides the largest portion of resources for attaining development targets and goals. It is a tribute to the governments here today that they have done so much, with sometimes, so little. And we should continue to promote this level of national ownership, responsibility and accountability from within. Developing countries should continue to rally together to create the right national and international environment for growth and development.

This is not to discount the responsibility of the North and the support they provide. Countries of the North have made the commitment and many are living up to these promises. But we all know that such resources are not limitless.

Strong cooperation among developing nations can strengthen advocacy for sustainable solutions for debt relief, increased ODA, in line with the Monterrey Consensus; and fairer terms of trade.

An enabling environment for development is being able to foster, through cooperation between the North and the South, and between the South and South, conditions that ensure self-reliance.

Fourth, stronger South-South cooperation is needed to achieve international development goals.

For many decades the merits of South-South cooperation have been well recognized as has been affirmed again in this Summit.

This cooperation allows nations to link to each other, to share knowledge and best practices, expand trade and investment and to exchange experiences and expertise, in order to respond effectively to their development needs.

UNFPA fully supports South-South cooperation, developing the national capacities, systems and institutions in the area of population and development.

South-South Cooperation is most important when it comes to finding ways to combat HIV/AIDS. The scourge of AIDS is preventing, and in some cases unraveling, the hard won gains many developing countries have made towards development. The hopelessness, despair and suffering it causes calls for urgent cooperation to guarantee the millions of people who need treatment can have access to low-cost generic anti-retroviral drugs. Just as important is the cooperation that is urgently needed to prevent HIV. Current HIV prevention efforts are brutally insufficient and unless greater action is taken to reduce new infections, it will not be possible to keep pace with the number of people with HIV/AIDS in need of treatment.

There is now a wealth of knowledge on what works in responding to the epidemic and much of this experience is from the South - Uganda, Brazil, Thailand, India, Cambodia, South Africa and Senegal. South-South cooperation is one of the effective weapons we have at our disposal to respond to this devastating epidemic.

And my fifth and final point. Social investments in population and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS make economic sense.

Analysis in Thailand found that every dollar invested in family planning programmes saved the Government more than \$16. Similar analysis exists for other countries like Mexico and Egypt, where investment in family planning has resulted in significant savings.

Reproductive health investments, in particular family planning, can produce what is called a "demographic bonus" or "demographic window". This is spurred by lower rates of fertility and mortality, and a large healthier working age population, relative to those who are dependent. In many regions and countries it will be the youth of today who will be part of the working age population when the demographic bonus reaches its peak.

Today, we are seeing the largest number of young people alive, over 1 billion adolescents, the majority living in countries in the South. This presents a unique opportunity. With appropriate investments in health and education, including concerted efforts to halt the spread of HIV, and with conducive economic policies and governance, countries can unleash their young peoples' potential, and launch an effective economic and social transformation.

A few countries in East Asia have already taken advantage of their demographic bonus by investing in social programmes. This has led to a dramatic drop in poverty, estimated to account for about one third of the region's unprecedented economic growth from 1965 to 1990.

The demographic window is now opening for a large number of countries where fertility has declined sharply in the last two decades. For the least developed countries, with still high fertility, there is still time. Learning and sharing is critical and urgent.

We must all take the responsibility to make this happen. Through effective and sustained cooperation, we can ensure that a greater number of countries enjoy greater progress.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I would like to stress UNFPA's commitment to make the right to development a reality for all people. It is only through national leadership and cooperation among countries that we will succeed.

Thank you.