



STATEMENT BY MR. M.S. PURI, ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON AGENDA
ITEM 4 – GENERAL DEBATE ON NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POPULATION MATTERS;
CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE INTERNATIONALLY
AGREED DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS
AT THE 42ND SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT ON APRIL 01, 2009

Madam Chairperson,

We congratulate you and other members of the Bureau of the 42nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development and assure you of India's support in your conduct of the proceedings of this Commission. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary General for the reports that have been prepared for the Commission and also to the distinguished keynote speakers who have made excellent presentations in the course of the Conference.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Group of 77.

Madam Chairperson,

The Government of India accords the highest importance to promote development with social justice i.e. inclusive growth. Indeed, this is the objective of the 11th Five Year Plan, which commenced from 2007-08. We are also making major efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Developed Goals, which are encompassed by several of the objectives and targets laid down in our national Five Year Plans.

Madam Chairperson,

A key weapon against poverty is employment. This is particularly so for a country like India, with its large population. In this context the Government of India is implementing a unique programme, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, to ensure minimum levels of employment in rural India. This would also lead to creating productive infrastructure throughout the country. This scheme has an annual allocation of USD 2.5 billion and guarantees 100 days of work to every household.

Madam Chairperson,

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), launched in 2005, is one of the biggest interventions of its kind in the health sector in the world. The NRHM seeks to significantly upgrade effective healthcare throughout India covering over 600 million people. It aims to improve access of rural people, especially poor women and children, to equitable, affordable, accountable and effective primary healthcare.

Reproductive and Child Health Programme is one of the main components of the NRHM, and includes the ambitious programme of Janani Surakhksa Yojana (JSY), a safe motherhood intervention to promote institutional delivery with specific focus on poor pregnant women. So far, this programme has benefited more than 10 million women and has emerged as a major successful intervention in reducing maternal and infant mortality.

Madam Chairperson,

India's Family Planning Programme is one of the oldest in the world. It is based on voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing of reproductive health care services. The programme aims at achieving population stabilization by addressing unmet needs through decentralized planning and programme implementation. At primary health care institutions, there has been an integration of HIV/AIDS programme with the reproductive health care.

Madam Chairperson,

India has also embarked on ambitious programmes for human resource development. The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Education for All Campaign) launched in the year 2000, is a major national intervention towards achieving universal primary education and allowing us to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend from a young population. The Government aims to raise public spending on education, collectively at Centre and State levels, to at least 6% of GDP in a phased manner, with half of these amounts to be spent on primary and secondary education.

Madam Chairperson,

Gender equity and empowerment have also been guiding principle in the development policies of the Government of India. India's planning process is fully committed to enabling women to be equal partners in development. Gender budgeting has been introduced across all the sectors. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments introduced the provision for one-third reservation of seats for women in local self

government institutions. India has the distinction of having the largest number of women representatives in local government in the world.

Madam Chairperson,

The Annual Report of the Secretary General on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development for this Conference (E/CN.9/2009/5) makes for worrying reading. The demand for resources has grown dramatically since the targets were agreed upon in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development. The Conference targets are simply not sufficient to meet the current needs of developing countries in the critical areas of family planning, reproductive health, and STD/HIV/AIDS. It is a matter of great concern that the donor assistance for family planning as a percentage of all population assistance has steadily declined from 55% in 1995 to a mere 5% in 2007. We fear that in the absence of adequate flow of funds, the progress made so far will be negated.

Madam Chairperson,

This meeting is being held in exceptional times when we are faced with a global financial and economic crisis that is seriously affecting developing countries even though they have not been the cause of it. This adverse impact should not be further exacerbated through the remedies that have inherent protectionist tendencies, limit foreign workers and goods, apart from creating non-tariff barriers that work against developing countries.

Thank You Madam Chairperson.

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