



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP 77 AND CHINA DELIVERED BY MR. SULTAN AL-MAHMOUD, DELEGATION OF THE STATE OF QATAR, AT THE 37TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (New York, 22 March, 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau for your election, and would like to assure you of our confidence and support. I would also like to thank Ambassador Serksnys and the members of the Bureau of the 36th session for their efforts. Furthermore, I would like to thank the UN secretariat for their work, and for the preparation of the reports and documentation for this session. The reports and other documents provide us with food for thought on issues related to population and development. In this context, the Group has been in favor of placing a higher level of emphasis on the cross-cutting themes proposed following the end of the meetings of the 36th session; resource mobilization, capacity building and partnerships, lay at the very heart of the implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Key Actions.

The Group of 77 and China will have other opportunities to further comment on the contents of these reports throughout the work, and during the various discussions, of the Commission. We would like to however take this opportunity to make some preliminary comments on the subjects that will be under discussion during this session.

Mr. Chairman,

The session of the Commission this year bears particular importance, as it is convened 10 years after the adoption of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development convened in Cairo. And even though there is ample evidence to the progress achieved in the implementation of its common goals and principles, there is an equally strong recognition that much remains to be achieved. Many of our countries continue to experience high fertility rates, high mortality rates, while facing the deadly threat of HIV/AIDS. We also face many challenges presented by international and internal migration, including the rapid growth of our urban populations, further challenging our development strategies. In Cairo in 1994, all delegations pledged their collective efforts to address the challenges and inter-relations between population and development. Ten years later, the challenges and inter-relations, and the need to address them continue to fare high on our agenda. In this context, I would like to highlight the following:

First, The Group re-affirms its commitment to address these challenges. We re-affirm our commitment to the principles and objectives and goals of the Cairo Program, as reflected in document A/conf.171/13Rev.1, and its Key Actions, and re-affirms our commitment to the developmental goals outlined there-in. It is in this context that the Group seeks to ensure that the commitments made in Cairo are translated into actions and also contribute significantly to the Millennium Declaration goals.

Secondly, the Cairo Conference emphasized the spirit of common solidarity in issues of development; this spirit was carried on in other major UN conferences and summits. The Group cannot over-emphasize the importance of this point in the attainment of a more stable, more just and equitable international economic system.

Thirdly, we believe that Cairo provided us with a holistic approach in addressing issues of population and development. The developed countries acknowledged their responsibility in the international pursuit of development and in narrowing the imbalances in a manner that can benefit countries, particularly developing countries. The Group stresses the interest of its members in ensuring the fulfillment of commitments to implement the financial targets of the Cairo Program of Action as an important component of development strategies towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and beyond, as well as the intensification of coordination to ensure the efficiency of the use of resources and the identification of funding gaps. The Group also stresses the importance of the mobilization of new and sustained resources to fully implement the Cairo Program of Action,

Fourthly, we recognize the importance of exerting continuous efforts and mobilizing domestic resources for the achievement of a better quality of life for our people. It is in this spirit that members of the group have intensified their efforts to achieve the objectives of Cairo and its Key Actions, in particular in the area of reproductive health and rights and in improving the quality of health care for all; this is particularly important in the framework of the development of primary health care and of health sector reforms. The developing countries have confronted these

issues head on despite serious limitations on their resources and competing development priorities.

Fifthly, we would also like to stress the importance of the mobilization of human resources, the strengthening of programs aimed at capacity building in developing countries, as well as enhancing partnerships to ensure broader and more intensive involvement within our countries towards the achievement of the Cairo Program of Action.

The challenges that confront us are many, but we are willing to address them; though it is important to recognize the difficulties presented by the current international economic environment. In this context, our developmental concerns have to be addressed. A more just and equitable international enabling environment needs to be set up. Trade imbalances, the alleviation of the burdens of debt and commodity dependency, amongst other issues, should be placed high on the agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

As we assess the fulfillment of the goals set out in Cairo, the Group would like to pay special tribute to UNFPA. The activities of UNFPA in particular in the developing countries have proven over the years to be of crucial importance to the achievement of the goals and principles of ICPD and the Key Actions. As a consequence, these activities have contributed to our common endeavor towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in particular, and in our development efforts in general, the success of which will reflect positively not just on the developing countries, but on a wider international scale.

The Group would also like to express its sincere appreciation with and support to the work of the Population Division. The dedication of the division to issues of population and development remains unwavering. We would like to thank them, and encourage them to continue their efforts in the field.

The Group believes that continuous support to UNFPA and the Population Division of the Secretariat is of high importance in our efforts towards the attainment of the goals of ICPD. The differences in each of UNFPA's and the Population Division's mandates is what makes their efforts so important, and so different yet so inter-linked and complementary. We encourage them to continue and to intensify their cooperation towards the achievement of the objectives of the Cairo Program.

Mr. Chairman,

As to future sessions of the Commission, the Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to express the importance that it grants to the theme of the 38th session of the Commission "Population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty". Furthermore, the Group believes that the main theme for the Commission's deliberations in its 39th Session should be "International migration and development". This will provide us with the opportunity to address one of the main issues of the Cairo Program of Action and would provide an appropriate input by the Commission to the General Assembly's High Level Dialogue on the issue, scheduled for 2006.

The Group welcomes suggestions on the examination of the working methods of the Commission and is willing to be engaged on this issue during the current session. We believe in the importance of this issue, within the context of the work of the Commission and in the broader context of General Assembly Resolution 57/270 B. We hope the Commission will be prepared to have a more thorough consideration of the issue during the 38th session.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express my delegation's commitment to the success of this session of the Commission. We are confident that the work of the current session will bear positively on future sessions, and on the attainment of the goals agreed to in Cairo. We are also hopeful that the future will witness more intensified efforts towards the translation of the goals of the Cairo Conference into actions. I hope that such anticipation is shared by members of the commission, so that we may all continue to strive towards a better world for all.

Finally, the Group believes that 2004 is a year of commemoration for ICPD Programme of Action. The Group looks forward to the examination of the review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the ICPD within the framework of the cross-cutting theme which the group has agreed upon.

Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

