



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY NORMA TAYLOR ROBERTS,
PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE THIRTY-EIGHTH
SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (New York, 4 April
2005)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group wishes to congratulate you on your election to the Chair and we are confident that under your guidance and leadership the work of the Commission will achieve its objectives. We also extend congratulations to the other members of the bureau on their election.

The Group welcomes this opportunity to address the Commission on Population and Development. The year 2005 is a significant year for the Commission as the international community prepares for the June session of the General Assembly to review implementation of the Declaration on the Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Important to the work of the Commission also, is the September review of the progress made with regard to the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the social and economic fields.

This meeting of the Commission on Population and Development, with its focus on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the issue of HIV/AIDS, will make an important contribution to the upcoming proceedings and agreements taken.

The Group of 77 and China firmly believes that the goals and objectives set out in the ICPD Programme of Action, as well as in other outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, provide a comprehensive framework for international development.

The implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is crucial for the eradication of extreme poverty as well as the achievement of the other Millennium Development Goals.

Last month's review of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Platform for Action, was an important contribution to the process leading up to the September Summit.

The Group of 77 and China fully supports the advancement of women as a guiding principle for development. Protecting women's rights and empowering women and girls through education and health, including reproductive health, is key to economic and social progress. Increasing women's participation in decision-making at all levels is an urgent priority.

Ensuring universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as nations agreed in Cairo, will make a major contribution to improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and reducing poverty within families and nations.

The G-77 believes that population issues must be addressed in a comprehensive manner as outlined in the ICPD Programme of Action.

While it is projected that the population of the developed countries will remain the same at 1.2 billion in the next 45 years, the population of the developing countries is expected to grow considerably. Ninety-five per cent of all population growth is absorbed by the developing world, with the fastest growth in the poorest countries. This growth gives rise to concerns regarding the provision of social services and prospects for human well-being.

Today, we see that the poorest people have the least access to social services. When it comes to education and health, including reproductive health, it is the poorest who continue to be left behind.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no question regarding the primary responsibility of the State for the welfare of its people and the Group is committed to taking bold steps in the fight against poverty and suffering. The ability of developing countries to do so is hampered by other imperatives. Speedier and deeper debt relief called for by the UN Secretary-General in his report for the September Summit, along with increased flows of ODA, and fairer terms of trade will further enable developing countries to make greater progress in meeting their needs and hopes for a better future.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 believes that far greater efforts must be made to combat HIV/AIDS, and we are committed to working with all partners to ensure that greater progress is made. The fact that 5 million people were newly infected last year shows us in a powerful way that much more needs to be done.

While AIDS treatment is expanding through the 3 by 5 initiative, which is most welcome, it is also true that prevention must also be urgently increased. Today, more than 20 years into the pandemic, every person should possess the knowledge and means to protect him or herself from HIV infection.

The Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize the importance of building on existing systems in the delivery of AIDS programmes. In many countries, there is an urgent need to strengthen health systems and take measures to retain trained health workers.

We fully agree that stronger linkages between reproductive health and HIV/AIDS policies, programmes and services will result in more relevant and cost-effective programmes with greater impact. This is especially important to address the trend of rising infections among women and girls.

Mr. Chairman,

As stated earlier, gender equality is an important goal in itself and a requirement for sustainable development. But it has also become clear that it is furthermore a powerful and indispensable tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Group will continue to work with all partners to achieve universal access to reproductive health by the year 2015. In this regard, the G-77 lends its full support to the inclusion of this target under Millennium Development Goal 5 to improve maternal health.

Before concluding, allow me to make a few brief remarks on the reform of the working methods of the Commission on Population and Development.

The G-77 is of the opinion that the Commission should adopt a multi-year work programme structured to ensure that the issues in the ICPD Programme of Action can be reviewed within every five-year framework, using broad categories such as population growth and composition, health, and migration.

The G-77 believes that the multi-year work programme would bring further value to the work of the Commission on Population and Development and increased focus to meeting international development goals.

The G-77 and China is prepared to have further discussions on the format of the work programme of the Commission and also the question of the formal rotation of the members of the bureau elected at each session of the Commission under the item on the working methods of the Commission.

I thank you.

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