

BEIJING DECLARATION October 30, 1981

PREAMBLE

1. We the Parliamentarians from nineteen countries of Asia attending the first Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Beijing from 27th October to 30th October 1981 in addressing ourselves to the interrelationship between Population and Development:

- Note the efforts made by countries of Asia in social and economic development and their initiatives in the formulation and implementation of population policies and family planning programmes during the last two decades, which have contributed significantly to the decline in the global birth rate;
- Recognise the inextricable relationships between population, resources and environment in the efforts to manage issues of poverty, employment and development and, in this regard, reaffirm the objectives and goals of the Colombo Declaration on Population and Development and the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Resources, Population and Development;
- Reiterate the need for the countries of Asia to adopt an approach which will ensure the appropriate integration of resources and population in the formulation and implementation of their development policies and programmes;
- Affirm the need for closer co-operation among countries of Asia in their endeavour to accelerate and advance the social and economic well-being of their peoples while respecting the national sovereignty of each country;
- Reaffirm the need for continuous efforts towards the early realisation and establishment of the New International Economic Order for a just and equitable distribution of the world's resources, and stress that these goals be realized through strengthening the bonds of solidarity and co-operation between and amongst the countries of Asia.

2. Acknowledging the diversity in religion and beliefs as well as culture and traditions, and mindful of the differences in social, economic and political conditions in the countries of Asia, we recognise, however, that we share many common concerns:

- That the current population of Asia is estimated to be 2.6 billion, accounting for nearly 60 per cent of the total world population, and that by the year 2000 it is expected to increase by another billion;
- That 90 per cent of the world's poor live in Asia and if present trends continue, this situation will further deteriorate. This large proportion of our population suffers from malnutrition, illiteracy and ill health and thus do not fully enjoy their basic human rights and the benefits of development;

- That although women constitute nearly 50 per cent of the population of the countries of Asia, this important sector has not been accorded equal opportunity to effectively participate in the development process and share the benefits thereof;
- That although nearly 60 per cent of total population in Asia is below the age of 25, estimated to be 1.5 billion in 1980, youth as a vibrant segment of human resources has not been provided adequate opportunities for their development to the fullest potential as citizens and leaders of the future;
- That while many countries of Asia are endowed with abundant natural resources, the achievement of a long-term balance between population and resources in order to improve the quality of life for our people is constrained at present by a lack of complementary factors essential for the effective and productive utilisation of these resources;
- That the effects of the imbalance between population and resources are resulting in deforestation, soil erosion and other ecological changes leading to a deterioration of the natural environment which if unchecked will threaten every human being;
- That most countries of Asia and other developing countries pre-dominantly depend on agricultural production and the exploitation of natural resources and do not realise the just and equitable benefits from their participation in the existing international economic system;
- That peace, national security and stability are preconditions for development, and unless these are guaranteed for Asia, all our efforts to better the quality of life for our people cannot succeed.

OBJECTIVES

In view of the concerns as expressed in the Preamble and recognising the need to deal with them more effectively, this Conference, therefore, addresses the following objectives:

1. To promote co-operation and collaboration amongst Parliamentarians of the countries of Asia through greater and continuing interchange of experience and knowledge in population and development.
2. To further improve and enrich the quality of life of the people of Asia through a more effective utilisation and management of resources by the integration of population, resources and environment in the development process.
3. To attain social justice and economic progress through a more effective mechanism to hasten the

process of an integrated and balanced approach to population, resources and development at national, regional and international levels.

4. To consolidate the efforts and strengthen the co-operation between and amongst countries of Asia to achieve the early realisation and establishment of the New International Economic Order.

CALLS TO ACTION

THE CONFERENCE CALLS ON:

1. Parliamentarians of Asia

To encourage the formation of national groups of Parliamentarians concerned with the issues of population and development and through these groups to:

- increase the awareness and promote greater understanding of the interrelationships between population and development amongst Parliamentarians;
- initiate, promote and support exchange programmes amongst Parliamentarians from the countries of Asia and other countries of the world, in order to increase knowledge of, and to exchange experience dealing with the inter-relationships between population and development so as to develop new ideas and approaches to these issues;
- promote continuing dialogue between Parliamentarians and social, economic and population planners and implementers at local, regional and international levels.

2. Governments of Asia

In formulating strategies and programmes for the socio-economic development of their peoples, not to ignore the wealth of intellectual, philosophical and cultural traditions, but to draw upon the richness of this knowledge and its scientific basis for direct application to planning and implementation efforts.

In consonance with national needs and aspirations, to demonstrate their political will and to give greater impetus in support of the existing population programmes and allocate adequate resources to meet the needs of the programme, in addition to the adoption of a comprehensive population policy as an integral part of national development plans.

To establish a national co-ordinating body, where it does not exist, for the formulation and effective

implementation of population policies and programmes.

To undertake periodic population surveys and examine their population trends and the impact of these trends on health, education, agricultural and industrial development, housing and the environment.

To increase financial allocation for family planning and population programmes within their country according to their needs.

To stimulate and sustain community participation and involvement in population and development through efficient use of the mass media as well as through effective mobilization and utilisation of community resources.

To promote and strengthen the participation of non-governmental voluntary organizations in programmes of population and development at local, national, regional and international level in a spirit of common endeavour and partnership. To this end the government should encourage non-governmental voluntary organizations to intensify efforts to accelerate the process of integration of population with development by according a pivotal place to their role within the framework of national policies.

To review the existing targets and goals in the implementation of population and development programmes so as to contribute to the attainment of the one per cent population growth for the Asian region by the year 2000.

To strengthen and expand socio-economic development programmes and ensure that development is directed towards reducing and narrowing social and economic disparities and thus hasten the creation of a just society.

To ensure that the development process includes emphasis on individual and community self-reliance by creating, among the people, greater self confidence, social awareness and responsibility as well as political consciousness oriented towards a grassroots approach in development planning and implementation.

To plan an effective strategy for conservation of their natural resources and their effective utilisation while being mindful of the need to safeguard the environment.

To widen the opportunities of women for equal participation at all levels in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of development, taking particular note of the United Nations Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade for Women in the field of Health, Education, and Labour at the Copenhagen Conference, July 1980.

To enact and implement laws on family rights, where necessary, to ensure full and equal rights for men and women and to raise the level of education of women to make possible an increase in their social responsibilities and rights, particularly in their role as mothers.

To initiate, promote and utilize studies and research for better understanding of the problems of youth so as to introduce programmes to harness these vast human resources in the best interest of future development.

To promote basic and vocational education and training, to ensure continuing education, to integrate population education with formal and non-formal educational systems as a preparation for youth to become responsible citizens for their participation in development and population programmes.

To re-emphasise the importance of and inculcate the need to balance material development with spiritual values, particularly among the young, so as to achieve the fullest benefit from development.

To give greater consideration to increased incidence of drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases.

To strive for the early achievement of the goals and objectives of the New International Economic Order by intensifying co-operative and collaborative efforts in areas of mutual interest.

To undertake measures to increase inter-Asian trade and economic co-operation so as to take the fullest advantage of any economic complementarity, the availability of natural resources and the market potential existing among the countries of Asia.

To increase meaningful dialogue between the developed and the developing countries in order to improve trade relations and effect a more equitable share of resources, technology and expertise.

3. All Governments

To increase the overall allocation of international assistance to population programmes of UNFPA,

other agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, and reaffirm the call of the Colombo Declaration on Population and Development to achieve an annual target of one billion dollars for population assistance by 1984 and contributing governments to designate a meaningful proportion of their development aid to population programmes. The increased international assistance proposed here will require that the role and function of UNFPA be strengthened.

To strive for the cessation of mass migration in the form of refugee movements caused by political and military aggression, taking particular note of the United Nations resolutions on this matter.

To strive for the cessation of the arms race as a step towards genuine disarmament and further utilization of the resources thus made available for the solution of population and development problems.

4. The United Nations

To hold a UN World Population Conference in 1984, as recommended in the Colombo Declaration, to review the progress made over the ten years since the Bucharest Conference on population and to make proposals for further action.

To declare an annual World Population Day as a measure to increase awareness and enhance the understanding of the population problems as they relate to development.

5. The UN and all its specialized agencies and organizations, the World Bank and regional development banks as well as other inter-governmental agencies

To increase their financial support and contribution to governments of Asian countries in order to sustain and further promote the implementation of projects and programmes for integration of population with development.

To follow up this Conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development by supporting the organization of similar conferences at least once in every three years.

To maintain close relationships with groups of Parliamentarians in this endeavour and support the organization of sub-regional meetings of Parliamentarians on the same subject on a regular basis.

To support the continuing efforts of Parliamentarians at Asian and sub-regional levels to effectively co-ordinate the activities of national groups of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

To support the strengthening of existing training and research institutions in the field of reproductive health, contraceptive technology and population and development studies in Asia, and to establish greater co-operation and collaboration amongst Asian countries as well as to expedite the development of trained manpower and expertise in this field which will indeed hasten the process of integration of population with development.

To accord high importance to the non-governmental organizations for transforming the family planning programme into a broad-based peoples' movement and to emphasise the role of the private sector in supporting the efforts of these organizations.

To support and consolidate programmes of non-governmental organizations which are consistent with national policies for integrating resources, population and development thereby facilitating the achievement of national goals. To this end, non-governmental organizations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) have a key role to play and should get increased support.

6. Non-Governmental Organisations

To raise their efforts and level of participation in spreading information on population issues and in implementing family planning programmes within the framework of national policies, especially in remote and inaccessible areas where access to family planning is not normally available.

7. Press and Media

To provide positive coverage of population and development issues, so as to increase public awareness and understanding of these matters.

8. Religious Leaders

To take into account the tremendous impact of population pressures on human, spiritual and physical well-being.

COMMITMENT

We, the Parliamentarians at this Conference, in our various capacities as legislators, community leaders and representatives of the people, commit and dedicate ourselves to continue initiating and

pursuing actions to achieve effective integration of population into development policies and programmes.

AS LEGISLATORS

- we will stimulate the interest and create awareness and understanding of the inter-relationships between population and development amongst fellow parliamentarians;
- we will promote the formation of groups of parliamentarians concerned with population and development at national, regional and international levels;
- we will ensure through appropriate legislative measures that adequate allocation of resources be provided for the implementation of projects and programmes designed to integrate population into development policies and programmes;
- we will participate in and support the implementation of policies and programmes so as to facilitate effective integration of population with development, and to ensure that the benefit will reach all levels of society, especially the poor and the underprivileged;
- we will ensure that discussions and deliberations on population issues are guided by the best interest of the nation as a whole.

AS COMMUNITY LEADERS

- we will generate public support, participation and involvement to achieve optimum use of resources in implementation of programmes to improve the socio-economic level of people.

AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE

- we dedicate ourselves to function as the channel of communication for the articulation of the peoples' needs and problems as well as to ensure and to be involved in the assessment of the implementation of policies and programmes and to bring about the necessary adjustments and improvements;

we, who are the closest link between government and the people, dedicate ourselves to carry the message of the inter-relationships of population and development through grass-root organizations.