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REPORT

ASIAN CONFERENCE OF
PARLIAMENTARIANS ON
POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

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ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development was held in Beijing from 27 October to 30 October 1981. Nineteen countries participated. The Conference was hosted by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and was sponsored by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

This report provides a summary record of the proceedings of the Conference, including the Beijing Declaration which was adopted unanimously by the Conference participants.

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CHAPTER I

BEIJING DECLARATION

Preamble:

1. We, the Parliamentarians from nineteen countries of Asia attending the first Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Beijing from October 27 to October 30, 1981, in addressing ourselves to the interrelationships 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 realised 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 people suffer 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 the 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 the 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 the very existence of human beings;
- That most countries of Asia and other developing countries predominantly depend on agricultural production and the exploitation of natural resources and do not realise 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 of 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 itself to 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 peoples 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.

THIS CONFERENCE THEREFORE CALLS ON:

All Parliaments of the Countries of Asia:

1. 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 interrelationships 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 implementors at local, regional and international levels.

Governments of the Countries of Asia:

2. 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.
3. 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 programmes, in addition to the adoption of a comprehensive population policy as an integral part of national development plans.

4. to establish a national co-ordinating body, where it does not exist, for the formulation and effective implementation of population policies and programmes.
5. 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.
6. to increase financial allocation for family planning and population programmes within their country according to their needs.
7. 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.
8. to promote and strengthen the participation of non-governmental voluntary organizations in programmes of population and development at local, national, regional and international levels in a spirit of common endeavour and partnership. To this end the government should encourage non-governmental voluntary organisations 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.
9. 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 rate for the Asian region by the year 2000.
10. 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.
11. 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 grass-roots approach in development planning and implementation.
12. to plan an effective strategy for the conservation of their natural resources and their effective utilisation while being mindful of the need to safeguard the environment.
13. 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 adopted at the Copenhagen Conference in July 1980.

14. 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.
15. to initiate, promote and utilise 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.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. to give greater consideration to increased incidence of drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases.
19. 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.
20. to undertake measures to increase intra-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.
21. 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.

ALL GOVERNMENTS

22. to increase the overall allocation of international assistance to population programmes of UNFPA, other agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organisations, and reaffirm the call of the Colombo Declaration on Population and Development to achieve an annual target of one billion (one thousand million) 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.

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

THE UNITED NATIONS

25. 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.
26. to declare an annual World Population Day as a measure to increase awareness and enhance the understanding of population problems as they relate to development.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND ALL ITS SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS, THE WORLD BANK AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS AS WELL AS OTHER INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

27. 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.
28. to follow up this Conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development by supporting the organisation of similar conferences at least once in every three years.
29. to maintain close relationships with groups of Parliamentarians in this endeavour and support the organisation of sub-regional meetings of Parliamentarians on the same subject on a regular basis.
30. 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.
31. 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.

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

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

34. 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.

THE PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA

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

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

36. 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 action 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 interrelationships 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 interests of the nation as a whole.

AS COMMUNITY LEADERS

- we will generate public support, participation and involvement to achieve optimum use of resources in the implementation of programmes to improve the socio-economic level of the 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 interrelationships of population and development through grass-root organisations.

FINALLY, IN ALL THESE EFFORTS

we commit ourselves to work closely with other organisations in order to realise the aims and objectives of this Declaration.

RESOLUTION NO. 1

Adopted by the Asian Conference of Parliamentarians
on Population and Development

We, the parliamentarians attending this Conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Beijing, China, 27-30 October 1981, wish to record our appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the Steering Committee for the successful organisation of this Conference.

As a result of the interest generated during the course of this Conference, we recommend that:

- In order to maintain and sustain this interest, a protem committee consisting of Asian parliamentarians be established to form an Asian forum of parliamentarians on population and development in order to promote co-operation and involvement of Asian parliamentarians in the area of population and development;
- this protem committee shall develop the terms of reference and modus operandi of the proposed mechanism;
- this protem committee shall also seek ways and means to secure adequate financial and administrative support for the effective operation of this proposed mechanism, and to seek the co-operation of UNFPA and other international agencies and Governments, particularly those from Asia; and,
- members of the Steering Committee of the Conference of Asian Parliamentarians, Beijing, shall continue to function as members of the protem committee.

Adopted unanimously on 30 October 1981.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

2.0 At the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 28 August - 1 September, 1979, a Declaration was issued. Paragraph 29 of this Declaration read: "The Conference believes that it would be useful to parliamentarians to meet at the regional level to exchange information and experience gained in their countries and to promote the holding of such regional or sub-regional meetings".

2.1 As part of this process of regional meetings, a Convention of ASEAN Parliamentarians on Resources, Population and Development was organized by a Steering Committee of ASEAN Parliamentarians with UNFPA support in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September, 1980. A Conference of African Parliamentarians on Population and Development was organized by IPU in cooperation with UNFPA in July, 1981 in Nairobi, Kenya.

2.2 The meeting of ASEAN Parliamentarians called upon UNFPA to "follow up the Convention of ASEAN Parliamentarians on Resources, Population and Development by supporting the organization of an Asian Conference on Resources, Population and Development as soon as possible".

2.3 After consultations among national groups of parliamentarians concerned with population and development, a Steering Committee comprising members from China, India, Japan, Malaysia and Sri Lanka was set up to prepare for an Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. The National People's Congress of China indicated its willingness to host the Conference, and UNFPA agreed to co-sponsor it.

2.4 The Steering Committee to the Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development held three meetings. The first meeting of the Steering Committee held in Tokyo, Japan on 23-24 February, 1981, elected Dr. Ranjit Atapattu of Sri Lanka as Convenor of the Committee and Mme. He Liliang of China as Deputy Convenor.

At this meeting the provisional agenda, day-to-day programme and rules of procedure were agreed upon. An initial list of resource persons was drawn up and a report on preliminary conference arrangements was presented.

2.5 At the second Steering Committee meeting held in Beijing, China on 19-20 June 1981, the list of invitations was discussed. It was decided that invitations should be issued to the country members of the Asian group of the United Nations General Assembly, with parliamentary systems. A number of United Nations Organizations and non-governmental organizations were invited as observers. The meeting also considered various organizational arrangements and a proposal was tabled calling for the establishment of a parliamentarians' forum as a follow-up to the Conference.

2.6 The third Steering Committee meeting was held in Beijing, China on 26 October, 1981 to discuss last-minute arrangements for the Conference.

2.7 A unit was set up within UNEPA to ensure continuous liaison with the Chinese Preparatory Committee in making all the arrangements and preparations for the Conference. Mr. Jyoti Singh was designated Conference Secretary and Mr. Akio Matsumura Conference Coordinator.

CHAPTER III

ATTENDANCE

3.0 The Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development was held in Beijing, China from 27 to 30 October, 1981.

3.1 Parliamentarians from the following 19 states took part in the Conference: Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand.

3.2 Brazil was present as a regional observer since it is planning to hold a Latin American Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

3.3 Apart from representatives of the sponsoring organization, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the Conference was attended by representatives from the following United Nations organizations: United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations University and World Health Organization.

3.4 Representatives of the following 13 non-governmental organizations also took part: All -China Women's Federation, Asian Population Youth Coalition, China Family Planning Association, Chinese Population Association, East-West Centre, International Committee on Management of Population Programmes, International Federation of Institutes of Advanced Study, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning, Inc., Population Action Council/Population Institute, Population Crisis Committee, Population Council.

3.5 Appendix I contains a list of participants.

CHAPTER IV

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND ELECTION

OF THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

4.0 The opening ceremony of the Conference was presided over by Mme. Chen Muhua, Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

4.1 The Vice-Premier, in wishing the Conference every success, stressed the importance of the deliberations that would take place over the next few days and felt sure that it would contribute to a furtherance of international co-operation.

4.2 Mr. Liao Chengzhi, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and Chairman of the Chinese Preparatory Committee, welcomed the participants and thanked the sponsors and the Steering Committee for all their efforts.

4.3 Mr. Liao recalled that the main theme of the Conference was "trends, plans and policies of population, resources and development in Asia" and felt sure that the discussions would promote regional co-operation among the Asian Parliamentarians on the question of population and development, stimulate the interest of the peoples of Asia in this question and increase mutual understanding and friendly exchanges among the people of various countries.

4.4 Mr. Liao sketched some of the historical reasons for the present population and development status of Asia. He stressed that it was imperative to adopt positive and appropriate measures to reduce the excessive rate of population growth while striving to develop their economies. He reiterated that population policies are the internal affairs of every sovereign country; however, the attainment of a more harmonious co-ordination between population and development was a major issue of concern to all at present.

4.5 Parliamentarians had a duty as legislators, moulders of public opinion and representatives of their constituencies to promote the work of population and development. But population was also an international concern and the Conference should contribute to international co-operation in population activities.

4.6 Dr. Ranjit Atapattu, Convenor of the Steering Committee, expressed his thanks to his fellow members of the Committee, to UNFPA and the people of China for their assistance in making this Conference possible.

4.7 He noted that in the decade after the Second World War, Asia had been concerned with the prevailing high mortality rates and had placed much emphasis on the development of a health infrastructure. Consequently, there has been a dramatic reduction in mortality figures. In the 1960s attention had turned to the balance between population and resources. The people of Asia had responded to the challenge because rural Asia had acted with a sense of community responsibility.

4.8 Dr. Atapattu also believed that the Governments of Asia had acted responsibly with an increasing emphasis on population as part of development strategy. However, he felt that the developed countries had gone on a consumption spree, displaying unbridled consumerism, even in the face of the escalation in oil prices as well as a terrifying expenditure on armaments.

4.9 He noted that nearly two-thirds of the world's population were represented at the Conference and hoped that Asia would act unanimously here without showing any political or ideological differences.

4.10 The Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, Mr. Rafael Salas, noted the historic occasion of this first major Conference to be held in the People's Republic of China in collaboration with a United Nations organisation.

4.11 Mr. Salas said that the key factors determining the welfare and living standards of people in the twenty-first century will be resource availability, the state of the global environment and the rate of population growth. In the development of Asia, the question of population growth appeared to be the most important factor.

4.12 Drawing attention to the disturbing fact that about 90 per cent of the world's poor live in Asia, Mr. Salas declared that, while many countries within Asia were endowed with abundant natural resources, it was the lack of financial and technological means which constrained their development. He also noted the growing unemployment and under-employment in the region and that the most important measures to improve the living conditions of the people would include policies to reduce income and wealth disparities, the spread of education, especially the education of women, greater participation of women in non-traditional economic activity and the development of a more accessible health care system. It was of the utmost importance that effective communication channels and means of delivering population programmes be developed. Population programmes must, therefore be fully integrated with the development process.

4.13 In praising the success of China in this integration process, Mr. Salas suggested that the annual rate of population growth in Asia could be brought down to one per cent by the year 2000. The Asian experience showed that it was possible to bring about a 30 to 40 per cent reduction in birth rates within a decade.

4.14 Mr. Salas reminded the Conference of the calls for large increases in international population assistance emerging from the Colombo Conference of Parliamentarians and the International Conference on Family Planning in the 1980s held in Jakarta. In the end, he warned, the Asian countries will have to rely primarily on their own resources.

4.15 He, therefore, suggested that all Asian countries who can provide external aid should increase their assistance to population programmes to the maximum amount possible;

- that there should be more co-operation within Asia in contraceptive technology research and demographic and policy studies;
- and that a larger exchange of experts in population should be promoted by encouraging some of the existing national training institutions in this region to become centres for regional co-operation.

4.16 The Malaysian delegation proposed Mr. Liao Chengzhi, Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and Chairman of the Chinese Preparatory Committee to be Chairman of the Conference. This proposal was seconded by Japan and approved unanimously.

4.17 The business of the opening ceremony having been completed, the Conference adjourned for a short break before resuming in plenary session.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE PLENARY SESSIONS

5.0 The first session of the plenary meeting opened with Mr. Liao Chengzhi in the chair; he expressed his gratitude to the delegates for having elected him as Chairman of the Conference.

5.1 The provisional agenda and day-to-day programme was approved by the meeting as presented without any amendments.

5.2 The Rules of Procedure were approved by the meeting as presented without any amendments.

5.3 The Chairman announced that Dr. Ranjit Atapattu, Convenor of the Steering Committee had been appointed Secretary General of the Conference in accordance with Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure previously approved.

5.4 Messages of support and greetings to the Conference were read out to the meeting. They were sent by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Kurt Waldheim; Chairman Ye Jianying and Premier Zhao Ziyang of the People's Republic of China; Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India and President J.R. Jayewardene of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The full text of these messages is included in Appendix II.

Mr. Takashi Sato (Japan) presented to the Conference a message of greetings and best wishes for Mr. Zenko Suzuki, Prime Minister of Japan.

5.5 The delegation of Sri Lanka proposed the following names to be the six vice-chairmen of the Conference. They were Mr. Takashi Sato (Japan), Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia), Mr. Hisham Al Sati (Syria), Mr. Mirza Ruhul Amin (Bangladesh), Mr. Radhe Shyam Kamaro (Nepal), Mr. Alexis Galanos (Cyprus). The proposal was seconded by the Philippines and approved unanimously.

5.6 The Chinese delegation proposed Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad of Malaysia as Chairman of the Drafting Committee. This was seconded by Nepal and approved unanimously.

5.7 Thailand proposed Mr. Eduardo Faleirio (India), Mr. Chandra Bandara (Sri Lanka), Ms. Carmencita O. Reyes (Philippines), Mr. Eisaku Sumi (Japan) and Mr. Wang Youping (China) as members of the Drafting Committee. Fiji seconded this proposal which was approved unanimously.

5.8 Indonesia proposed Senator Dr. Sevanaia Tabua (Fiji) as Chairman of Committee I. Bangladesh seconded this proposal which was approved unanimously.

5.9 Japan proposed Mr. Sat Paul Mittal (India) as Chairman of Committee II. Sri Lanka seconded this proposal which was approved unanimously.

5.10 Mr. Takeo Fukuda, (Japan), Chairman of the Japanese Parliament Federation on Population, after paying tribute to the Government of China for hosting the Conference and to the efforts of Mr. Rafael M. Salas, Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, identified two main personal concerns: the disarray in the world economy and the political and military tensions between East and West. While the situation in the advanced industrial countries had not reached the point of causing social unrest in the developed countries, it was much more serious in the non-oil-producing developing countries. Long-term economic instability was an enemy both of individual nations and the world as a whole. What comes of economic instability is ultimately political instability as we witnessed in the 1930s just before World War II.

5.11 Even if we do survive the present serious world situation, this success alone would not suffice to guarantee a peaceful and happy future because we are facing yet another global problem - the imbalance between the finite resources we need and rapidly increasing population which is the focus of this Conference. The problems of population and development are particularly important in Asia which is the home of about 60 per cent of the world's population.

5.12 He stated that the legislative branch in collaboration with the executive branch of government should participate and co-operate in dealing with these problems. He welcomed wholeheartedly the gradual steps being taken by parliamentarians around the world to set up an institutional framework for such involvement. He also suggested that every resource at our disposal should be mobilized to ensure that population growth does not delay modernization in Asia. After the successful International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development held in Colombo in 1979, Japanese parliamentarians have actively co-operated in United Nations efforts in many ways including the encouragement of government contributions. On the occasion of this Conference, the Japanese parliamentarians pledged their redoubled efforts in this regard.

5.13 At this point, the Plenary Session was adjourned by the Chairman; and resumed on the afternoon of 27 October with Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia) in the chair.

5.14 Mr. Rafael M. Salas, Executive Director of UNFPA, called the attention of the Conference to the importance of the non-governmental organizations, many of whom were present and many of whom had pioneered work on population problems before governments themselves.

5.15 Messages of support and greetings from the governments of Iran and Malaysia were read out.

5.16 Prof. K. N. Raj (Resource Person) began his presentation by pointing out that there was a serious misconception, particularly in the Western countries, that the present situation in Asia in regard to population growth was the result of abnormally high levels of fertility and the result of a failure to follow the right economic and social policies for development. He pointed out that neither in terms of the levels and rates of fertility decline nor of agricultural and industrial growth had the Asian countries done any worse than Europe in their corresponding phase of development in the 19th century.

5.17 Prof. Raj said that the current problems of demographic transition in Asia arose mainly as a result of the success of very desirable policies in two areas: rapid decline in mortality arising from the spread of public health and medical care and the lack of opportunities for large-scale emigration which Europe enjoyed in the 19th century.

5.18 The problems posed by population growth in Asia are however extremely serious. This was not because the availability of food per capita is declining on account of population pressure but mainly because employment and incomes are not growing rapidly enough to absorb the growing numbers in productive activities. To the extent that there are limits to the feasible rates of agricultural growth, there are also limits to the rate of growth of domestic consumer demand for industrial products. Even a considerable higher rate of industrialisation may prove totally inadequate to absorb the rapidly increasing supply of labour arising from high rates of population growth. The heart of the matter is that in countries in which the bulk of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, rapid population growth erodes the surpluses that would otherwise be available for industrialisation and makes it that much more difficult to create employment opportunities outside agriculture.

5.19 For all these reasons there is no escape for the developing countries of Asia from following a conscious and vigorous policy for bringing down the rate of growth of population as rapidly as possible, if they are to overcome poverty and unemployment in the foreseeable future and ensure for their populations reasonable standards of living and prospects of sustained progress.

5.20 Prof. Raj concluded that the experience already gained by several countries in Asia, particularly those in East Asia, offers important clues to how this may be achieved in a short period given the necessary determination and single mindedness in following appropriate policies. Two important pre-conditions are the spread of education among women and the development of health services which ensure the probability of the survival of children.

5.21 Mr. Mirza Ruhul Amin, (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh considered population growth as its number one problem. The strong efforts on the population programme have brought down the annual population growth rate from 3.2 per cent in the early 1970s to an estimated 2.5 per cent in 1980-81. Bangladesh hopes to reduce the birth rate from the current level of 42 per 1000 to 32 per 1000 by 1985. Bangladesh has arrived at a national consensus to keep family planning above political controversy and Mr. Amin drew the attention of the Conference to the need for a policy declaration on this issue.

5.22 Mr. Luo Qingchang (China) welcomed all delegates to the Conference and expressed the willingness of China to exchange views and experiences with other Asian countries on population and development issues. Proper and effective handling of the relationship between population and socio-economic development has become a major issue of strategic importance for every country. A right solution to this issue will contribute to social progress, economic prosperity, cultural richness and the improvement of the people's living standards. China's population stood at 982.55 million at the end of 1980 and for this reason, China's population policy, population trends and its approach to the relationship between population and development are issues that have drawn attention from many countries in Asia and other parts of the world.

5.23 Practice in China has proved that a correct approach to the relationship between population and development is to actively practise family planning while devoting the main efforts to economic construction. The success achieved in China in the 1970s was mainly due to the incorporation of population programmes into the annual and five-year plans of national economic development.

5.24 At this point the Conference presented a Scroll of Appreciation to Professor Ma Yichung, Honorary President of Beijing University, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to population activities.

5.25 Dr. Soedjatmoko, Rector of the United Nations University, expressed his gratitude to the host country and noted that most governments of Asia have recognized that continued development requires their stabilizing their population as soon as possible and adopting policies and programmes aimed at curbing population growth. There now appears to be an emerging consensus that proper development may powerfully affect decisions on fertility and family size. Increasing attention is being paid to the ways in which population growth or reduction are related to social and cultural dynamics. Here migration and population movements are extremely important.

5.26 However, he pointed out the very imprecise nature of our knowledge about the modern-day movements on which we have had to base migration and population distribution policy. He suggested that more efforts be made to develop appropriate methodology and research on population distribution. Some of the complex aspects of human migration and its interdependent relationship with development which need to be investigated include: the impact of international or internal migration on fertility behaviour; the cultural, social and psychic costs of separation of families, particularly on women; rapid urbanization; transportation flow and energy costs; and political stability and security. He noted that the United Nations University was primarily interested in research that might contribute to solving problems related to the linkages between large-scale migrations, population policies and the overall development process.

5.27 Mr. Alexis Galanos (Cyprus) posed the choice to the Conference between a bigger or a better world. For Cyprus important factors in population matters included the integration of population policies with development planning, research into factors affecting fertility trends, the movements of population, the need for ensuring the preservation of human rights in family planning programmes and increased development aid for population programmes.

5.28 Mr. Nuon Chea (Democratic Kampuchea) was convinced that the Conference would further consolidate and enrich the results already achieved in the search for the best solution to the vast problem of population and development as well as deepen mutual understanding and strengthen friendship and cooperation in the region.

5.29 Mr. Pio Carlo Terenzio (Inter-Parliamentary Union) reviewed the history of cooperation between parliamentarians and the United Nations system. He particularly welcomed this regional meeting, since in many instances declarations on major issues could not be globally applicable.

5.30 Senator Dr. Sevanaia Tabua (Fiji) expressed his concern at the population increase endangering the economic future. He reviewed population policies and programmes in his country, drawing particular attention to the increase in the number of clinics and the free distribution of contraceptive devices.

5.31 Mr. Sat Paul Mittal (India) gave a lengthy and detailed overview of the population situation in India. In particular, he emphasized the pioneering role played by his country and the need to integrate local characteristics with the programme. Family planning had a long history as part of India's development plans and the Government was showing total commitment to the programme. Mr. Mittal praised the role of the voluntary agencies and outlined the history of the Indian parliamentary group on population, both of whom were making substantial contributions towards spreading awareness for the need to solve the country's population problems.

5.32 The second session of the plenary session opened on Wednesday October 28 with Mr. Radhe Shyam Kamaro (Nepal) in the chair. During the morning session, he was succeeded in the chair by Mr. Mirza Ruhul Amin (Bangladesh).

5.33 Dr. Ranjit Atapattu, Secretary-General of the Conference, read to the Conference a letter of thanks from Professor Ma Yinchu, in response to the scroll of appreciation presented to him the previous day.

5.34 Mrs. Mercedes B. Concepcion (Resource Person) spoke on "Population trends and policies in Asia"; she said that East and South Asia contain 58 per cent of the 1980 global population. The two most populous nations on this planet are found in Asia - China and India account for 37 per cent of the earth's inhabitants.

5.35 Mortality is still high in South Asia, where the average life expectancy in the early seventies was placed at 50 years. Only five countries - Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait and Lebanon - could boast of expectations of life in excess of 60 years. In East Asia, the corresponding average life expectancy was 63 years with probably China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea belonging to the low mortality class.

5.36 Declines in fertility exceeding 10 per cent were recorded for a third of the Asian countries between 1960-1965 and 1970-1975. The reductions were largest in China, the Republic of Korea and Singapore. More modest decreases were reported for Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

5.37 There exists a substantial difference in the perceptions and policies of Asian Governments with respect to population growth, mortality, fertility, and spatial distribution. It is clear that no close association exists between the observed demographic situation and the views and programmes of Governments, implying that countries base their decisions partly on non-demographic considerations.

5.38 Population policies are formulated with a variety of objectives in mind. The majority of Governments aim their action at a mix of objectives. After identifying which demographic processes are the sources of their problems, Governments attempt to modify several of these processes simultaneously. In Asia, among the 25 Governments that acknowledged problems due to the rate of natural increase, nine took action with regard to fertility, spatial distribution, international migration, and non-demographic processes at the same time. Seven moved to tackle mortality, spatial distribution, international migration, and non-demographic processes concurrently.

5.39 Different measures were adopted by Governments to implement their objectives. Programmes which directly influenced the demographic process, include the subsidised food ration in Sri Lanka, the distribution of free contraceptives in most countries, the use of "residence passes" in Indonesia. Also, some policies modified the context occasioning certain demographic behaviour, such as Iraq's policy of stimulating population growth by means of family allowances, as well as the Philippines' and Malaysia's use of tax incentives to promote industrial dispersal. A third type of strategy was geared toward changing a prevailing socio-economic situation whose continuance would aggravate the population problem.

5.40 The importance that Governments attach to demographic variables in their analyses of development problems determines the type of action they undertake. It is apparent that unless Governments believe that their development problems have both demographic and non-demographic origins, they will not move to resolve the situation.

5.41 Mr. Mohammad Yazdi (Iran) informed the Conference that the constitution of Iran recognised the family as the basic unit of society and women to have complete equal rights. It also recognized their right to participate in all economic, political, social and cultural affairs.

5.42 Mr. Eisaku Sumi (Japan) emphasised that population problems are closely related to economic and social development. Population control is not the ultimate goal; it is to promote socio-economic development and improve the standard of living. It is difficult to solve population and family planning problems in the short term. It is a problem which must be solved from an overall viewpoint in conjunction with education resources, environment and long term development.

5.43 He further said that Japan is faced with a new set of problems; one is that of population migration with the younger population moving from the rural areas to the urban cities.

5.44 The second problem is the rapid aging of the population. The decrease in birth rate in the post war period has created a considerable decrease in the age distribution of the population. It is estimated that by the year 2000 the aging population will be 20 million, 15 per cent of the total population. If the decline in the birth rate continues, and the percentage of the young population decreases further, aging of the population will be a problem of vital importance to Japan.

5.45 He expressed his full recognition of the importance of the population problem and also recognised that parents should decide the number of children and the birth-spacing of their families as a basic human right. The various conditions peculiar to each nation and locality must be appreciated when population policies were decided.

5.46 Prof. Liu Zheng (Resource Person) said at the outset that China's population problem has drawn peoples' attention because it is a problem with special importance. By the end of 1980, China's population constituted nearly 22 per cent of the world's total population. 80 per cent of China's population lives in rural areas and persons below the age of 14 constitute 36.8 per cent of the total population. China inherited a backward economy and economic reconstruction takes a long time. High population growth will retard the pace of economic reconstruction and hence China attaches great importance to reducing this rate.

5.47 Since the 1970s China has achieved a remarkable decrease in its population growth rate, reducing it from 2.59 per cent in 1970 to 1.16 per cent in 1979. This reduction has been achieved because the Government and administration attached the greatest importance to family planning. It has been accepted that birth control is necessary to correct the imbalance between population and economic growth.

5.48 China is a socialist country and there is not a conflict between collective and individual benefits. If the population grows faster, the communes will find it difficult to accumulate funds and raise the per capita income. Therefore, as part of its family planning programme, China attaches great importance to ideological education. Besides, there is also a close correlation between family planning and women's emancipation.

5.49 China has taken a number of measures to ensure the increase of its family planning programme. Incentives and allowances are given to single child families. Retirement pensions are also provided to parents of single child families. Since 1980, specialised planned-birth centres have been established.

5.50 Mr. Daifallah El-Hmoud (Jordan) said that world peace is an important contribution to the solution of population and development problems. He said that the convening of this Conference at the Chinese capital has great significance. Mr. El-Hmoud made the following suggestions:

- i) The establishment of an Asian Parliamentary Union, under IPU, to execute the decisions taken by Asian Parliamentarians on population and development. It should co-operate with UNFPA and other international agencies;
- ii) Establishment of an Asian Population Fund, subscribed to by loans and grants from the capital rich countries of the region to support UNFPA activities;
- iii) Holding of regular courses and surveys to provide data and information for economic planning;
- iv) Issuing of a proclamation urging Governments to facilitate the movement of labour, the free flow and exchange of development information, better road links, air and sea communications among Asian countries;
- v) Proclaiming that peace alone can solve most problems relating to population and development.

5.51 Mr. Ahamed Zahir (Maldives) said that the Maldives has only a population of 150,000 scattered over 202 islands. The Government of the Maldives recognises the importance of population control and the participation of the Maldives confirms the willingness of a nation which is 100 per cent muslims, to control population growth. The Maldives has 82 per cent literacy among its adult population and, therefore, educating the public on health matters has been very successful. Health conditions in the Maldives are poor due to the presence of water borne and communicable diseases. Life expectancy is only 46.5 years and infant mortality rate is 120.7 per 1000 children. The population growth rate of the Maldives has risen from 2.8 per cent in 1967 to 3.01 per cent in 1977.

5.52 Mr. Radhe Shyam Kamaro (Nepal) said that Nepal, with a population of 14.2 million and a growth rate of 2.3 per cent per annum, faced tremendous challenges. Nepal has adopted a policy promoting integration between population and development. In 1965, Nepal adopted family planning. Other key population problems included external and internal migration. Therefore, Nepal's population policy includes equitable population distribution as one of its major objectives. The population policy is implemented by the National Commission on Population. The infant mortality rate and the traditional social and cultural values favour a large family. Nepal's development programme emphasises the provision of basic social facilities such as schools and hospitals.

5.53 Prof. Toshio Kuroda (Resource Person) spoke to the Conference on the topic of "Population Resources and Environment for Development". He outlined the current and future trends in Asia with particular emphasis on the impact of population changes on resources and the environment. The two most critical areas were energy consumption and food requirements and he posed the dilemma that, although new agricultural techniques must be used to expand production in Asia, they also carry the potential for serious environmental trends. Prof. Kuroda also surveyed the problems arising from rapid urbanisation and reviewed some of the policies being implemented in Asian countries.

5.54 Prof. Kuroda went on to look at the Japanese experience in terms of the role of human resources in development. He explained that since Japan lacked natural resources, it had used human resources as a base for its technological progress and had consequently invested heavily in education and other means for developing human resources.

5.55 In conclusion, Prof. Kuroda called upon political leaders, Government development planners and scientists to tackle the resource and environment problems arising from rapid population growth. He recommended that regional and sub-regional mechanisms should be developed to study and make policy decisions on these topics and called for a closer link between all institutions for exchange of information and personnel.

5.56 Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi (Malaysia) described the formation of a Malaysian Parliamentary Committee on Population as a follow-up to the Colombo Conference and how his country had hosted the ASEAN Convention last year. He felt that ASEAN's initiative should be duplicated at other regional and international levels. He described how the exploitation of natural resources was still geared to an economic order based on the living standards of the industrialised countries and called for a more effective use of resources and a consolidated approach to the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

5.57 Ms. Carmencita O. Reyes (Philippines) described the thrust of the Philippine nation's programme as "the enrichment of human life, not its restriction, by assuring greater opportunity to each person to attain individual dignity and to reach his full potential". She said that spiritual concepts and social philosophies had had a profound impact on the population programme and that the emphasis was on human resource management, the structure of employment, labour productivity and income distribution.

5.58 Dr. Ow Chin Hock (Singapore) briefly reviewed the population situation in his country and how the family planning programme was attempting to achieve the two child family norm by use of the mass media. Singapore had placed great emphasis on education and training aimed at the long term improvement of the quality of life.

5.59 Mr. Chandra Bandara (Sri Lanka) briefly reviewed the economic situation in his country and paid tribute to the co-operation between the voluntary agencies and the Government in population activities. Sri Lanka had established a Population Division in the Ministry of Plan Implementation and was convinced that population must go hand-in-hand with economic development.

5.60 Mr. Hisham Al Sati (Syria) after outlining the physical and demographic aspects of his country, emphasised the need to take population variables and indicators fully into account in all sectors of development planning. However, Syria did not yet have a comprehensive population policy and the Government had recognised the need to strengthen the planning methodology and infrastructure and to deal fully with human resources planning and development.

5.61 Mr. Boontium Khamapirad (Thailand) described how his country had suffered from the population explosion but an effective alliance to combat this problem had been forged between Government, non-Governmental organisations and the commercial sector. Following the Colombo Conference, Thailand had instituted a reform of its abortion law. However, the major problem now facing the country was the massive influx of refugees.

5.62 The Chairman closed the second session of the plenary committee.

5.63 The third plenary session took place on the afternoon of 30 October. Mr. Alexis Galanos (Cyprus) was in the chair.

5.64 A message of greetings from Canada was read to the Conference (see appendix II).

5.65 The Resolution No. 1 (for full text, see page 9) was proposed by Thailand and seconded by Malaysia. It was approved unanimously.

5.66 Mr. Baha Ahmed Faraj (Iraq) described the situation in his own country and stated that population policy was essential in raising the standard of living of the people. Iraq intended to raise fertility, rapidly reduce morbidity and mortality and secure the return of qualified citizens from abroad as well as encourage immigration from other Arab countries.

5.67 The Draft Declaration, as drawn up by the Drafting Committee was then put to the Conference paragraph by paragraph. Iran proposed an amendment to reflect the discussion on the role of women and motherhood which had taken place in Committee II. This was approved by the Conference and became paragraph 14 of the Final Declaration. Thailand proposed an amendment to emphasize the need for recognition of the problems caused by refugee movements. This was approved by the Conference and became paragraph 23 of the Final Declaration. In paragraph 33 of the Final Declaration, Syria proposed that brackets should be placed around the words "such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)" to denote that IPPF was only one, albeit an important one, amongst non-governmental organizations working in the population field. This was approved by the Conference.

5.68 The Declaration as amended was approved and adopted unanimously by the Conference.

5.69 Mr. Sevanaia Tabua (Fiji), Chairman of Committee I, presented the report of his committee to the plenary session.

5.70 Mr. Sat Paul Mittal (India), Chairman of Committee II, presented the report of his committee to the plenary session.

5.71 In statements closing the Conference, Mr. Ranjit Atapattu, Secretary General of the Conference, Mr. Rafael M. Salas, Executive Director of UNFPA, and Mr. Liao Chengzhi, Chairman of the Conference, paid tribute to the hard work of those who had organized the meeting and to the spirit of co-operation and friendship among the delegates which had enabled the Conference to be such a success.

5.72 The Chairman then declared the conclusion of the Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

CHAPTER VI

REPORT OF COMMITTEE I

6.0 Committee I was chaired by Dr. Sevanaia Tabua (Fiji). The following persons were elected Vice-Chairmen of the Committee: Mr. Nuon Chea (Democratic Kampuchea), Mr. Mohammad Yazdi (Iran), and Mr. Boontium Khamapirad (Thailand). Resource persons for the Committee were: Mr. Jawad Al-Anani (Minister of Labour, Jordan), Mr. Visit Boonyakesanond (Director, Population and Manpower Planning Division, National Economic and Social Development Board, Thailand), and Mr. Mafizur Rahman (Member, Planning Commission, Bangladesh). Secretary of the Committee was Mr. Hirofumi Ando.

6.1 Preamble: Since extreme poverty is the biggest stumbling block in the way of reducing fertility, it is necessary that the efforts of developing countries in the direction of economic improvement be facilitated. The evolution of the New International Economic Order is an imperative necessity in this and the Conference should urge the developed countries of the world to adopt a more helpful attitude in the matter.

6.2 The Committee was concerned with the subject of "Integration of Population with Development" and discussed specifically the issues related to:

- (1) Development implications of population dynamics in Asian countries;
- (2) Fertility and mortality trends;
- (3) Population distribution;
- (4) Education;
- (5) Employment;
- (6) Public and environmental health.

These issues were examined taking into consideration the role of parliamentarians in Asian countries.

Development Implications of Population Dynamics

6.3 For effective integration of population factors into development planning processes, the Committee recognized the need to develop adequate institutional resources at National level including trained personnel, appropriate administrative structures and procedures for coordination of concerned public and private sector organizations as well as the allocation of adequate financial resources. The role of parliamentarians is particularly relevant to the legitimization of population activities especially at the grass-roots level.

6.4 Human rights are the focal point of all development efforts including family planning which ensures dignity and choice for couples for a better quality of life to select their own family size and make of contraceptive according to their cultural norms and religious belief, keeping in view national objectives.

Fertility and Mortality

6.5 The Committee noted that there has been a gradual fertility rate decline as well as mortality rate decline (especially infant mortality) in Asian countries, partly because of the expansion of family planning and public health services. The Asian regional target set by ESCAP in 1975 for annual population growth rate of 1.85 per cent had already been achieved by 1980. By the year 2000, the United Nations has projected a population growth rate of 0.95 per cent from East Asia and 1.9 per cent for South Asia. Even though these medium projections are conservative, it is very clear that Asia is far from achieving replacement growth level by the end of the century.

6.6 It is recommended that a regional target of annual population growth rate be set at one per cent by the year 2000 in order to alleviate the adverse effects of rapid population growth and to stimulate socio-economic development in Asian countries. It was recognized by the Committee that the achievement of such a target requires further intensification of family planning programmes especially in South Asia. It is also imperative that population programmes should be integral parts of overall development processes.

6.7 It is recognized that individual countries in Asia, in the context of their specific socio-economic objectives, will decide on their own targets; but, as a great majority of Asian countries are committed to reducing their population growth rate as speedily as possible, the reduction of the population growth rate for Asia as a whole to one per cent annually by the year 2000 appears feasible.

Population Distribution

6.8 There is a universal problem of migration, especially of youth from rural to urban areas, which creates not only unemployment but also congestion leading to social, economic, health and environmental problems. Efforts should be made to provide better educational, social and employment opportunities at the village level through agricultural and rural development. It is recommended that the relationship between immigration and fertility behaviour should be monitored and studied for the formulation of more effective population policies.

6.9 Increasing international migration has been taking place in a number of countries in the region. While it contributes to the economic development of both labour-importing and exporting countries, it is recommended that adequate protection of individual migrants and their families should be provided through appropriate legislation and the establishment of a regional institutional mechanism to guarantee the rights of the migrant workers.

6.10 Mass migration in the form of refugees creates instability, socio-economic burdens and impediments to the host country and must be stopped.

Education

6.11 Education in general and for women in particular is one major factor affecting fertility rate. Several examples in Asia have clearly shown that education brings down the birth rate. It is strongly recommended that education should be given high priority in the formulation and implementation of population and development planning policies. Special emphasis should be given to the education of the vast majority of people who are either in the reproductive age group or going to enter this age bracket shortly. All formal and non-formal educational channels should be used not only to make them literate but also to increase their level of awareness and knowledge about all socio-economic issues including the small family norm. Concrete steps should be taken to make education development oriented towards practical and vocational training rather than towards higher or college education. The Committee recognised the importance of women in family planning: raising their status in any possible way should be a concern of all people.

Employment

6.12 Rapid population growth is one of the strongest constraints on the achievement of full employment. It is recommended that any national development planning which is aimed at providing maximum employment must be related to the population and family planning policy.

6.13 Scientific knowledge available to mankind needs to be put to the fullest use for generation of employment opportunities. With this view an appropriate technology needs to be evolved and developed, in which task the assistance of developed countries would be valuable.

Resources and Development

6.14 There is growing concern about the effect of rapid population growth on world-wide resources thereby creating grave ecological imbalances. The global population is growing at such a speed that natural resources and the environmental capacity of the globe are being fast depleted. Soil erosion, deforestation, siltation, lowering of the water level, water logging, climatic changes, and pollution are becoming increasingly serious problems for the survival of mankind. It is recommended that the birth rate be so regulated that the net increase of population is commensurate with the available non-renewable natural resources. Exploitation of such limited resources should be so regulated that their utilisation is judiciously planned.

6.15 It is recommended that current trends in the demand and supply of resources in the region must be monitored to promote regional cooperation in stabilizing the supply of resources. Information should be exchanged on technological improvements, especially appropriate technology for better utilisation of resources. There is an urgent need to increase current expenditure in developing countries on population and family planning programmes. This Conference therefore calls upon the countries providing development assistance to increase their support of population programmes from the current two per cent of development assistance outlays to at least five per cent. It is further recommended that a more equitable resources utilisation should be achieved between the developed and the developing countries.

Public and Environmental Health

6.16 The provision of adequate public and environmental health, particularly the maternal and child health services, is considered to be an essential component for an effective population planning programme. For this purpose, the para-medical and para-professional personnel who are in direct contact with people at the community level should be trained and equipped to provide preventive and curative health and all aspects of family planning services. Special efforts should be made to encourage the medical profession to work more closely with these para-medical personnel, especially in the maternal and child health service scheme.

6.17 For more effective family planning services, it was felt that maximum encouragement and resources should be allocated to research and resources should be allocated to the research and development of safer and more effective contraceptive methods which are also conducive to the physiological and cultural conditions of Asian people.

6.18 Realizing the high incidence of elderly persons due to a lower birth rate and a longer life expectancy, it is of great concern to preserve the Asian culture of respect to the elderly. Aging persons form a large component of the population that can be beneficial to socio-economic development. Elderly persons can help society to promote mental development as well as social welfare. Health care of the elderly should be implemented.

Parliamentarians and Population

6.19 Parliamentarians have a very important role to play not only in formulating population policies but also in conveying information about such policies to their constituencies. They have the most direct and closest contacts with the people. Their regular involvement in population programmes is vital in the formulation of comprehensive population policies. Therefore, some kind of institutional mechanisms at the national and regional level will be needed to further stimulate wider and more active involvement of parliamentarians.

6.20 Parliamentarians should also closely examine and revise, if necessary, existing regulations and legislations which are contrary to the promotion of family planning within the context of overall development plans. It is essential that population issues should be dealt with in a non-partisan fashion since they are universal problems transcending social class, race, religion and political affiliations.

World Population Day

6.21 It was further suggested that in order to promote population activities at the national level and at the international level, a World Population Day be instituted by the United Nations.

CHAPTER VII

REPORT OF COMMITTEE II

7.0 Mr. Sat Paul Mittal (India) was appointed Chairman of Committee II at the opening plenary session. The Philippines delegation proposed Dr. Iswari (Indonesia), Mr. Abdul Sattar (Maldives) and Mr. Daifallah Hamoud (Jordan) as Vice Chairmen. The proposal was seconded by Syria and accepted unanimously. Resource persons for the Committee were: Datin Nor Laily Aziz, Director General, National Family Planning Board, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Dr. R. H. Pardoko, Deputy Chairman for Population, National Family Planning Coordinating Board, Jakarta, Indonesia and Dr. Pramilla Senanayake, Medical Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation, London. Mr. Michael Palmer served as the Committee Secretary. The Committee had four sessions on 28, 29 and 30 October.

7.1 The Committee made the following recommendations which are grouped under the items listed for discussion:

7.2 Review of Population - Family Planning Programmes and Measures to Stimulate and Sustain Community Participation

The Committee heard from a number of countries, non-governmental organisations and research persons about population and family planning programmes and other interrelated subjects;

- It was proposed that to stimulate and sustain community participation in population programmes, the mass media should be utilised fully.
- It was agreed that there was a need to reach, and work through, small groups, (i.e. under 50-100 persons) as targets while planning population programmes. The more basic the unit or organisation, the more effective the programme would be.
- It was proposed that a low interest loan and incentive programme should be instituted to initiate productive activities amongst small groups, to stimulate more women joining such groups and thus the population programme and to maintain cohesiveness in the basic unit;
- A study group should be formed to look at the role of narcotics and other causes of morbidity in Asian statistics and increased emphasis should be placed on preventive measures to reduce morbidity within the primary health care programme;
- More research and action was needed to eliminate involuntary sterilization and infecundity in the countries which have problems in these areas. No family planning or population programme should be undertaken in contravention of human rights.

- More attention should be paid to younger people (in educational institutions and more especially the newly weds) in population and educational programmes. Efforts should be made to increase literacy.
- Since a significant proportion of the population in Asia are in the age group below 25 years, intensive efforts must be made to harness this human resource through provision of universal basic education, greater emphasis on vocational training in addition to academic training so that the youth of today can be developed to their fullest potential as citizens of tomorrow.

7.3 Full and Equal Participation of Women - Motherhood and Family Responsibilities

- Wherever possible, encouragement and, particularly, legislation should be used to raise the age of marriage;
- Increased emphasis should be given to programmes of education and training for women, especially income-generating activities. Particular emphasis should be placed on women in rural areas to give them equal opportunities for active participation at all levels in economic, social, political and cultural activities;
- Appropriate additional legislation should be enacted and implemented where necessary on family rights, to ensure full equal rights for men and women;
- The level of education of women should be raised to make possible an increase in their social responsibilities and rights, particularly in their role as mothers;
- More publicity should be given to the UNESCO Womens' Feature Service as a tool for exchange of information and ideas on womens' programmes and activities.

7.4 The Role of Local and Traditional Institutions and Voluntary Organisations

- Governments must fully recognise, where necessary, the crucial role that voluntary organisations, local and traditional institutions and the non-governmental sector in general, can play in the promotion of family planning programmes in a spirit of partnership;
- Governments and international institutions should take specific steps to extend facilities, including funds and technical assistance, to voluntary organisations to make their role even more effective.

7.5 Regional and International Co-operation and the Participation of Parliamentarians in Implementing Community Programmes

- As a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, an Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development should be instituted with a permanent secretariat, to co-ordinate the activities of National

- Parliamentary Groups throughout the region and in other parts of the world. One of the functions of this forum would be to organise conferences similar to the Beijing Conference as appropriate;
- Greater emphasis should be placed on exchanging population experts within the region and encouraging national training institutions to become centres for regional co-operation;
 - Parliamentarians should, wherever possible, encourage the formation of National Parliamentary Groups and Constituency level committees to oversee the population programme;
 - The day when UNFPA was officially founded is an important date and it should be designated the World Population Day to focus attention on population matters;
 - A march should be organised in various countries of Asia at different periods to focus attention on the danger in the massive growth of population at present rates.
 - More development aid both from the traditional donor countries and all other countries, especially Asian countries who are able to provide external aid should be forthcoming. At the same time, there is a need for nations to reduce the amount of expenditure given to armaments and divert the amount available from such reductions to peaceful purposes and programmes like Population and Development programmes for the benefit of all mankind, and particularly the poorer and more populous countries.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BANGLADESH - Mr. Mirza Ruhul Amin; Mr. A.K.M. Matiar Rahman; Ms. Rowshon Azad; Mr. A.S.M. Sulaiman.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA - Mr. Liao Chengzhi; Mr. Luo Qingchang; Mr. Wang Youping; Mr. Gao Dengbang; Mr. Xu Dixin; Mr. Wu Xinyu; Ms. Lin Liyun; Mr. Bai Jiefu; Ms. Yan Renying; Ms. Lin Jiamei; Mr. Zhang Youyu; Mr. Zhong Xidong; Mr. Zhu Futang; Mr. Kang Yonghe; Mr. Wang Xiaoyi; Ms. Luo Qiong; Mr. Fei Xiatong; Mr. Wu Jieping; Ms. He Liliang; Ms. Han Youtong; Mr. Cui Yueli; Ms. Li Xiuzhen; Mr. Li Chengrui; Mr. Sun U; Mr. Yu Wan; Mr. Fu Ke; Mr. Shi Guobao; Mr. Liu Qingshan; Mr. Sun Jingzhi; Mr. Liu Zheng. Honorary Advisor: Mr. Ma Yanchu, Advisors: Mr. Ding Min; Mr. Chen Songlu; Mr. Zhang Lequn; Mr. Xiu Huan; Mr. Cheng Yuangong; Mr. Zhang Chang; Mr. Tian Qiong; Mr. Ho Wenruo; Mr. Zheng Weirong; Mr. Yin Jieyan; Mr. Li Daoyu; Mr. Zhong Shukong; Mr. Chen Yuchu; Mr. Li Zhaoxing. Experts: Mr. Wang Xiangmin; Mr. Bai Jianhua; Mr. Zhang Xuexin; Mr. Wang Xinfu; Mr. Wu Cangping; Mr. Li Muzhen; Mr. Zhang Chunyuan; Mr. Zhang Mincai; Mr. Wang Yangsheng; Mr. Bao Kai; Mr. He Zhichun. Secretary General: Mr. Gao Dengbang; Deputy Secretary General: Ms. He Liliang.

CYPRUS - Mr. Alexis Galanos; Mr. Yiannakis Omiroy.

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA - Mr. Nuon Chea; Mrs. Kepauk Ne'e Soeurn; Mr. Se Phan; Mr. In Sopheap; Mr. Chau Teary; Ms. Sean Sa.

FIJI - Mr. H. William Yee; Senator Dr. Sevanaia B. Tabua.

INDIA - Mr. Sat Paul Mittal; Ms. Aziza Fatima Imam; Shri K. Lakkappa; Shri Eduardo Faleirio; Shri Santosh Mohan Dev; Shri Rattansing Rajda; Mr. Digvijay Singh; Mr. Cotor M.S. Sanjee; Mr. M.C. Bhandare; Dr. Bhai Mahavir; Mrs. Amarjit Kaur; Mr. Ladli Mohan Nigam; Mr. Vijai Pal Singh; Mr. Ahmad Bakhsh Sindhi; Mr. Ashoke Kumar Bose; Mr. Yagya Dutt Sharma; Mr. Tirupur R. Manimaran; Mr. T.L. Rajkumar; Mr. Dharam Singh; Mr. A. Eswars Reddy; Mr. R.S. Gavai; Mr. Baliram Vaman Hiray. Advisors: Ms. Avabai B. Wadia; Prof. J.C. Kavoori.

INDONESIA - Dr. Tini Iswari; Ms. Emilia Lun Hadaitu-lah; Mr. Zaidan Djauhari; Mr. Soemari Prawirowijono; Mr. Sabam Sirait. Secretary: Mr. Agem Ginting.

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APPENDIX II

MESSAGES OF GREETINGS

1. UNITED NATIONS

It is a great pleasure for me to send my greetings to the participants in the Asian Conference on Population and Development.

It is encouraging that your Conference - which is the first major international conference held in China in collaboration with the United Nations - has been convened to carry forward the worldwide consultative process among national legislators that was initiated at Colombo two years ago. On that occasion 350 parliamentarians from 58 countries committed themselves to the aim of helping to achieve an effective integrated approach to development and population policy. This approach is a fundamental part of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

Since the World Population Conference in 1974 in Bucharest, and the adoption of the World Population Plan of Action, the awareness and understanding of these issues has deepened. International technical co-operation has become more effective and most importantly, the global rate of population growth has begun to decline. I should add in this context that progress in the field of population has been notable in Asia, especially in China.

However, much remains to be done. The decline in the rate of population growth notwithstanding, the actual numbers added each year continue to grow. Without accelerated development efforts, the rapidly changing balance between population and resources has serious implications for the human environment. New issues are emerging relating to urbanization and employment, international migration, refugees, the problems of an aging population and the needs of youth.

The Declaration of the Colombo Conference foresaw that unless effective action is taken now in the field of population and development, world population could rise to eight or even ten billion people within the next century. A delay of just one generation in bringing world population to a stable level could result in approximately three billion additional persons. If we are to meet the demands of a growing population, a massive allocation of resources devoted to development programmes will be required as well as a restructuring of those programmes. Also needed is a major expansion of health care and nutrition, education and family planning services.

The involvement and participation of people in all aspects of social and economic development is of paramount importance, since demographic change ultimately depends on the accumulated decisions of individuals. To begin to meet these challenges, national decisions concerning population development, made in the legislatures, must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of population and development. They must lead to new and more effective policies to tackle the issues involved and to assure the continuing flow of the resources which are needed.

I send you my warmest wishes for success in your deliberations on these important issues.

Kurt Waldheim
United Nations Secretary-General

2. CANADA

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to convey to you and to the participants a message of greetings and of success to your Parliamentarians Conference on Population and Development.

I wish to underline, since Canada shares them whole-heartedly, the main preoccupations expressed at the Ottawa Summit on this issue. The participating heads of state and government expressed their deep concern "about the implications of world population growth". They underlined that "many developing countries are taking action to deal with that problem, in ways sensitive to human values and dignity; and to develop human resources including technical and managerial capabilities". They recognized "the importance of these issues" and resolved to "place greater emphasis on international efforts in these areas".

Confident that your discussions will contribute to enhancing understanding and cooperation among our countries and our peoples, I reiterate my best wishes for success in your deliberations.

Mark MacGuigan
Secretary of State
for External Affairs

3. CHINA

On the occasion of the convocation of the Conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development, we would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the Conference on behalf of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Government and the people of China.

Asia is a vast continent with a large population and rich resources. Its people are industrious and intelligent. At present, most countries in Asia are faced with the task of defending their sovereignty and independence and accelerating their national construction and with the problem of how to coordinate population growth with economic development. The parliamentarians and resource persons from more than 20 countries are gathering here to discuss the question of population and development and learn from each other through exchange of experiences. This is very timely and meets the wishes of the broad masses of people in Asia. A proper coordination between population and development in Asia will not only help the economic development of various Asian countries and raise their people's standard of material and cultural life but also have important impact on the population trend and economic development of the world as a whole. We sincerely wish the Conference complete success.

Ye Jianying
Chairman of the Standing Committee
of the National People's Congress
of the People's Republic of China

Zhao Ziyang
Premier of the State Council of
the People's Republic of China

4. INDIA

In the earlier phases of history, people wanted more children because numbers denoted strength, diseases made life uncertain and physical labour was needed. Today, advances in medical science have reduced infant mortality. It is also being realized, especially in developing countries, that rapid and tangible improvement in levels of living of men, women and children is possible only if the family size is small. It would then be easier for nations to give people their due share of the fruits of progress.

China and India are the world's largest countries in terms of population. This is a legacy of their size and their long history. Both nations are today engaged in the gigantic task of national reconstruction and they recognize the contribution that family planning can make to this endeavour. Both countries want to benefit from the experience of other peoples in this vital field.

That is why India is participating in the Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Beijing.

On behalf of the Government and people of India I send my good wishes for the success of the Conference.

Indira Gandhi
Prime Minister

5. IRAN

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

We offer our congratulations to the conference on population and development which is being hosted by the People's Republic of China with the participation of the parliamentarians of Asian countries.

We hope that this conference with its special make-up which has been formed for the first time will study and arrive at suitable solutions for many of the economic, social and political issues our countries face together.

Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani
Speaker of the Islamic Consultative
Assembly
The Republic of Iran

6. MALAYSIA

May I extend to Your Excellency my warmest congratulations and good wishes on the convening of the Conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Beijing, People's Republic of China. We recognise the significance of this first conference and therefore wish the conference every success.

Tan Sri Dato (Dr.) Syed Nasir bin Ismail
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Parliament of Malaysia

7. SRI LANKA

Please accept my wholehearted best wishes for the success of the very first conference of Asian Parliamentarians on Population and Development both as head of government and also as the Minister responsible for population in Sri Lanka which hosted the first international conference of Parliamentarians on population and development in August 1979. The Beijing conference is a direct follow up stemming from the Colombo declaration issued by that international conference. My government continues to be guided by this declaration on population and development and commends the Standing Committee on its initiative in summoning this Asian conference.

May your meeting be crowned with success and have an impact on the vital issues it faces.

J.R. Jayewardene
President of the Democratic Socialist
Republic of Sri Lanka

UNITED NATIONS
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