

**International Workshop on  
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
Beijing and Kunming, China: 08 – 21 July 2007**

**Address by  
Mr. Harry S. Jooseery, Executive Director  
Partners in Population and Development (PPD) in the  
Opening Ceremony**

**H.E. Mr. Zhang Weiqing, Honourable Minister, National Population and Family  
Planning Commission (NPFPC), Government of the People's Republic of China**

**H.E. Dr. Zhao Beige, Honourable Vice Minister, National Population and Family  
Planning Commission (NPFPC), Government of the People's Republic of China**

**Mr. Bernard Coquelin, UNFPA Representative in China**

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to address you this morning at the Opening Ceremony of this International Workshop for Senior Officials on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. It is also a pleasure for Partners in Population and Development (PPD) to be associated with the Government of the People's Republic of China and to team up with the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China (NPFPC) and also with H.E. Mr. Zhang Weiqing, Honorable Minister of NPFPC and Chair of PPD in the organization of this workshop together with UNFPA. I would like particularly to thank the Minister Honorable Zhang Weiqing for his unrelenting support to PPD and for his unfailing commitment to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, especially among the developing countries and through the South-South Initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in 1994 the world community had a dream..... a dream to change the world population scenario and better the life of people living on planet earth. Indeed, the ICPD in Cairo ushered a new perspective that shifted the focus from Family Planning to Reproductive Health, from demography to health and well being. No longer was population to be discussed in terms of numbers, but instead from a human rights approach, the right of the individual to decide freely and without coercion when, where and how often to have children in recognition specially in women's right and responsibilities. We acknowledge

Sexual and Reproductive Health as a fundamental human right, and unless we direct our policies and programmes to meet the Sexual and Reproductive Health needs of the individual, we would fail to ensure respect for human dignity. ICPD created successfully an international consensus and support for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as a global development priority. The Annual World Population Growth is now 73 million registering a fall of 15% since 1994. Life expectancy has increased from 61 to 63 years, infant and maternal mortality have declined. However, most of the gains have consolidated in developed countries. A women's life time risk of dying due to maternal causes is 2,000 times higher in Sub Saharan Africa than in developed world. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate in developing countries is lowest in the world.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of women in Sub-Saharan Africa need but do not have access to Family Planning services. What is now commonly called the “**Population Growth Factor**” has reappeared and there is no warrant for complacency. Developing Countries are facing serious Sexual and Reproductive Health Risks. The general fall in world population growth rate hides the exceedingly unequal and disproportionate population growth of the developing world.

The exploding population of the developing world is now endangering the living conditions and existence and sprouts the fear of the appearance a Malthusian nightmare especially when we imagine the plight of the 2 billion people who live on less than \$2 per day. Besides unavailability of Reproductive Health information and services, poor access to education, malnutrition and famine, there are also socio-cultural barriers that reinforce gender prejudice, discrimination, violence and harmful practices. Reproductive rights are not respected, protected or fulfilled, nor do they exist in many parts of the developing world. Reproductive Rights have been subdued by **Reproductive Wrongs** that perpetrate and impact specially women and the marginalized.

However, we cannot be desperate. There is now a large and growing body of knowledge and experience available to improve reproductive health. We need to synergize our effort, translate knowledge and technology into policy and practices. The next decade is destined to be the turning point for a new population agenda that will reshape the Reproductive Health Strategy. We need an integrated approach that will offer opportunities to broaden Sexual and Reproductive Health services, and promote culturally-sensitive programme that will reach the poorest of the poor.

Developing countries have limited resources, but possess extraordinary ability and potential to make a difference. Many countries from all over the world wish to learn how China became the factory of the world, India the Guru of Information Technology and Thailand the 100% culturally sensitive condom promoter. Countries of the South could solve most of their problems through sharing of experience, expertise and know how among themselves. The idea behind the proposed formation of a **United States of Africa** is based on South South Cooperation. From ICPD in 1994 to Maputo Plan of Action in 2006, the world community reinforced their strong belief in South South Cooperation as the key route to address SRH issues. Partners in Population and Development is an intergovernmental organization mandated to promote SRH, Population and Development programme through South South Cooperation. PPD commits to

1. increase legal literacy and make information of RHR accessible to all
2. advocate nationally and internationally for the adoption of an integrated approach to address the problems of SRHR
3. improve access to SRH quality of care and informed choice in recognition of the right of the clients
4. support sharing of experiences and best practices on RH
5. use right based approach to address socio-culturally sensitive RH issues

Ladies and gentlemen, in our effort to address burning Sexual and Reproductive Health issues pertinent to the developing countries, PPD is indebted to China which is investing tremendously in support to South-South Cooperation. PPD has signed 3 Memorandum of Understanding with China for the promotion of capacity building, transfer of expertise and technologies and forte promotion of Reproductive Health Commodity supply to developing countries. We are very grateful to China for its tremendous support and we would like to place on record the unfailing assistance we received from Honourable Zhang Weiqing, Minister of National Population and Family Planning Commission of China. Thank you once again Hon. Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.