



**Partners in Population and Development  
A South-South Initiative**

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**Statement by  
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*Second Regular Session of the Executive Board  
of the United Nations Development Programme  
and  
the United Nations Population Fund  
United Nations Headquarters, 30 August - 3 September 2010*

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to make a few comments, on behalf of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD), on the introductory statement made by the Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid. I want to congratulate Ms. Obaid on her comprehensive statement.

As all of you know, PPD is an inter-governmental organization of 24 developing countries committed to the promotion of South-South cooperation in the field of population and development. With that mission in its clear view, PPD has been working closely with UNFPA at global, regional and national levels in support of the implementation of the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In parallel with the Fund's major priority areas of population data and analysis for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, universal access to reproductive health and HIV prevention, and advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, PPD is encouraging and supporting activities in those areas as they relate to capacity building through training, knowledge sharing through documenting of innovative practices in population and reproductive health and through information exchange, policy dialogue and advocacy for population and development. In undertaking these activities, PPD has greatly benefited from technical and financial support provided by UNFPA.

This Second Regular Session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, taking place this week, is being held at a very important moment in the United Nations. It represents a historic session for all the stakeholders of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the sense that it is happening at a time when a change of executive leadership at the Fund is becoming imminent.

It is significant for yet another reason, because the General Assembly would be soon holding its High Level Summit to review the progress made thus far in achieving the MDGs and adopt urgent actions to accelerate progress in those goals and targets that are lagging behind. While an uneven progress has been observed among the MDGs and across the countries of the world, there is no other pressing issue in development cooperation today than the alleviation of poverty in the poorest developing countries.

In this regard, PPD, like many other agencies and organizations, as well as countries, also note with concern the slow progress acknowledged in the draft Summit Outcome document, as it relates particularly to improving maternal and reproductive health, reducing maternal mortality, advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. PPD notes with the great satisfaction the renewed interest in maternal health and family planning as evidenced by the discussions of the last meeting of the G8 in Canada, the African Union Summit which took place in July in Kampala, Uganda. It is noteworthy that the next PPD-organized International Forum in Jakarta, Indonesia will

also discuss the issue of maternal health, as a priority. A much more concerted effort would be required by all if accelerated progress is to be achieved before 2015 on these important goals. Given the interrelatedness of the MDGs, progress on health and gender goals are crucial for the alleviation of poverty. Deliberations here on these issues would be useful for the debate on MDGs that would occur later during September in the General Assembly.

In the context of achieving the MDGs and ICPD goals, the role of South-South cooperation needs to be highlighted. The Ministerial Meeting of the High Level segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) noted the growing importance of South-South in development cooperation. According to the report of the Secretary-General (E/2010/93), South-South and triangular cooperation is continuing to grow in importance and currently accounts for about one-tenth (ten per cent) of all development cooperation. Many expect it to grow further in the future. Given this growing importance, the South-South modality is attracting attention and interest.

While a similar statistics for South-South in population is not yet available, it nevertheless can be noted that it too is growing. Family planning, reproductive health and population are areas where many developing countries have acquired a tremendous amount of experience and expertise over several decades and are conducive to South-South cooperation. PPD has been doing its little part since 1994, when it was established at the time of the ICPD in Cairo. PPD experience indicates that first-rate technical capacities exist in population and reproductive health field in many developing countries and greater efforts should be made to fully capitalize on such capacities through South-South and triangular cooperation. The Governments of Egypt, Morocco and India have offered long-term fellowships whereas China and South Africa are offering short-fellowships. In addition, PPD member countries have built a network of world-class institutions that can provide a whole range of training and research opportunities.

PPD would like to put on record its appreciation for UNFPA's strong commitment to promote South-South cooperation in population and reproductive health programmes, at global, regional and country levels. Also, PPD welcomes the Fund's recent effort in organizing a consultative meeting on South-South cooperation in Bangkok in July 2010 to help strengthen its strategy on South-South. PPD is pleased to have been part of that consultation process and looks forward to further strengthening its collaboration with UNFPA in the implementation of the Fund's strategy. The Partners in Population and Development is grateful to UNFPA for its continued collaboration with PPD.

Mr. President,

Before closing, PPD would like to pay its sincere tribute to the UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, who is planning to leave the Fund by the end of the year. During the last ten years, Ms. Obaid has been an outstanding Executive Director of UNFPA, an unflinching champion for reproductive health, a resolute voice for culture and gender empowerment, and a staunch global leader of population and family planning issues. We note with regret that she would not be at the helm of UNFPA in the future. We

wish her well and look forward to her continued leadership and contribution to the population and development scene in the future in other capacities.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.