

**Statement by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo  
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs**

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It gives me great pleasure to address the Commission for Population and Development for the first time in my capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

The Commission has a distinguished history dating back to its creation in 1946. The Commission on Population and Development was given a renewed mandate after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) convened in Cairo in 1994.

assembled here today were at the very center of the negotiations that resulted, in September of

progress towards meeting many of the ICPD objectives -- but that progress has been very uneven. I would like to highlight just a few of the major trends.

This year, world population will surpass 6.4 billion persons. The population in 2004 is nearly 800 million larger than in 1994; 95 per cent of that population increase occurred in less developed regions. Although the interaction between population dynamics and economic development is complex, the predominant view, as reflected in the Programme of Action, is that slower rates of population growth can allow more time to attack poverty, protect and repair the environment, and build the base for future sustainable development.

Globally, the average annual growth rate of population has decreased since the ICPD and is now 1.3 per cent. However, rates of population increase continue to vary greatly between countries. Today it is, in general, the least developed countries that are experiencing the most rapid population growth; during the past decade, the population of these countries grew at an annual rate of over 2.4 per cent. Rapid population growth remains a concern for more than half of Governments in the less developed regions. In the more developed regions, in contrast, a growing number of Governments are voicing concern over low rates of population growth and, in some countries, over population decline. In many cases, the concern is mainly with the consequences of population ageing for socio-economic development.

Since the ICPD in 1994, immigration has become a major issue of concern in an

the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This pandemic continues to expand throughout the world, producing a devastating impact on populations in terms of increased morbidity and mortality, and undermining prospects for social and economic development.

Finally, the Cairo Conference recognized that the formulation and implementation of population-related policies is the responsibility of each country, but it also recognized that all members of and groups in society have the right, and indeed the responsibility, to play an active part in efforts to reach those goals. It further recognized that national action needed to be supported by international cooperation. Thus, implementing the Programme of Action requires building and sustaining partnerships, building capacity, and mobilizing human and financial resources at all levels. An important task of the international community is to identify where there are gaps. One area in which the Conference goals have not been met is in mobilizing financial resources to implement the Programme of Action, as the Secretary-General's report on the flow of financial resources makes clear (E/CN.9/2004/4). Without the a solidly built and actively maintained foundation of political will and resources, both human and financial, the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action will not be fully achieved.

I wish you success in your deliberations, and reiterate the full support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its Population Division to your important work.