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United Nations Population Fund  
Office in Geneva

STATEMENT BY UNFPA

From its inception in 1969 UNFPA has had as its priority the well being of all people with special reference to the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt in September 1994, there is a section dedicated to indigenous people. Its main objectives are :

- (a) To incorporate the perspectives and needs of indigenous communities into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the population, development and environment programmes that affect them;
- (b) To ensure that indigenous people receive population- and development- related services that they deem socially, culturally and ecologically appropriate;
- (c) To address social and economic factors that act to disadvantage indigenous people.

As it's well known, there is no objective definition of what an "indigenous people" is. Nevertheless in line with its philosophy to be all-inclusive, UNFPA is providing support to all groups of society.

As result since 1994, UNFPA has supported several projects in the field which have been beneficial to indigenous people and minority groups.

- ◆ in Southern Morocco, through the good services of the United Nations and the government of Morocco, UNFPA is providing technical assistance to medical personnel to provide reproductive health services to the Saharoui population;
- ◆ in Palestine, UNFPA has since 1996 provided regular assistance to the population of Palestine in reproductive health and in support of the population census project. Special mention needs to be made of a joint project with UNRWA in which the population has made aware of gender inequalities and a need to remedy these. In particular improvement in the situation of women and male involvement in family life is promoted, through social assistance, legal and psychological counseling and community education.
- ◆ In Latin America, UNFPA is providing support for several projects in Peru and Bolivia for bilingual literacy programmes, reproductive health and gender equality. This initiative has been followed in other countries such as Ecuador, Paraguay, Mexico and Guatemala where the methodology developed in Peru and Bolivia is adopted to the indigenous languages of these countries. In addition to providing literacy skills, participants are also taught aspects of self esteem, gender relations, reproductive rights and reproductive health, personnel hygiene and public health.
- ◆ In India, UNFPA is supporting several projects on reproductive health care in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

In providing its support to groups of indigenous people, UNFPA is guided by the principles of human rights, full participation of the community and the promotion of welfare and well being for all.

Thank you for your attention.

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