

First International Congress
on Population Education and
Development

Action Framework
for Population Education
on the Eve of the
Twenty-First Century

Istanbul Declaration

Istanbul, Turkey 14-17 April, 1993

UNFPA

UNESCO

Istanbul Declaration

We, the participants at the International Congress on Population Education and Development, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Istanbul from 14 to 17 April 1993,

Recognizing that population issues should not be considered in isolation from overall development issues and programmes but rather be treated as an integral part of the development process,

Considering that population is an essential factor affecting sustainable development aimed at improving the quality of human life,

Convinced that education is a basic condition for population change and for human development,

Recalling the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) adopted by the 1974 World Population Conference and the recommendations of the 1984 International Conference on Population concerning the need to raise levels of knowledge on the issues of population, family life and health, as well as on educational action in these latter domains,

Noting the terms of the Amsterdam Declaration on A Better Life for Future Generations, adopted by the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, in Amsterdam in 1989,

Recalling the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women adopted in Nairobi in 1985 by the World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace,

Noting the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992,

Taking into account the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien in March 1990 by the World Conference on Education for All, and especially Article 5 on broadening the means and scope of basic education,

Noting the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace, and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1974, and the Declaration of the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, adopted in 1977,

Mindful of the conclusions of the five regional meetings (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean) organized in 1990 and 1991 in preparation for this Congress,

Adopt the following Declaration and approve the attached Action Framework for Population Education on the Eve of the Twenty-first Century.

The population issue is one of today's major planetary problems towards the solution of which education must contribute, just as it contributes to the overall development of human resources and the promotion of human rights, international peace and understanding, to the advancement of the status of women, to the protection of the environment, to the improvement of health and to the safeguarding of the cultural heritage and universal common values.

An education concerning population issues should be provided to both sexes and all age groups, at all levels and in both formal and non-formal education, taking into consideration the appropriate needs of each population group.

In particular, to adequately prepare the younger generations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, population education projects and programmes should be extended to the various levels of the education system, including higher education, to all types of educational institutions and to all settings of non-formal education, and be developed as an integrated dimension of educational curricula.

Population education, environmental education and international education constitute - albeit from different perspectives but nonetheless closely interlinked - an educational response to the same global problem: improving the quality of life and the relationships of human beings with nature and their fellow men and women. Even if emphases and priorities may differ from region to region and from country to country, these educative actions bring to light an interdependence amongst regional and national communities, and the need for co-ordinated action and international solidarity of mankind. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, these actions contribute to creating a realistic overall perspective which acknowledges the interaction which exists between population, resources and the environment, and to raising the awareness of individuals, families and communities to the enduring continuity linking the acts of today to their consequences for tomorrow.

Many population problems and their expression at the local level reflect controversial issues for different local, national, regional and international communities. It is, therefore, important to carry out this educative action within the framework of universal human rights, with the participation of all parties concerned and with due respect for prevailing socio-cultural values and beliefs of the people.

Since population education is an educational activity open to the family, the community and society, their representatives should be involved both in the definition of objectives, concepts and specific content, and also in developing the programmes.

Whilst population issues are global in scope and will have a long-term impact, they require action both at the macro and micro levels, that is at individual, family, community, regional, national and international levels.

Changes in the demographic situation can only be obtained with the free consent and the active participation of women and men concerned. Coercion is not only incompatible with democratic values and human rights, it is also ineffective in the long-term. Consequently, education about population issues should aim at developing freedom of informed choice and responsible individual behaviour.

The press and the mass media play an important role in the awareness creation of population issues by promoting, supporting and strengthening population education.

Formal education is the principal means of access for everyone to information and knowledge about population issues. All other forms of education also have their part to play and are required to ensure support for the development of population education.

Consequently, we the participants,

- **appeal** to all Member States to include in their education policies and plans a series of measures, including the allocation of appropriate resources, designed to introduce population education into their education systems, both formal and non-formal, and to further strengthen and support existing population education programmes,
- **invite**, Member States in particular to promote the conditions of a better access for all to information and knowledge about development, population and environment, sexuality and family life, as well as the links connecting these areas, and thorough research on this subject,
- **request** the developed countries to support the developing countries in their population education programmes,
- **request** UNESCO and UNFPA, in consultation with the concerned Agencies of the United Nations system conducting activities in education and in cooperation with international governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in this area, to continue to support Member States in the development of population education, and the promotion of exchange of experiences and research findings, and to provide appropriate intellectual, technical and financial assistance,
- **launch** an urgent appeal to the international community to increase the resources allocated to national, regional and international population education programmes,
- **call upon** the international community to bring about a more equitable economic system so that all countries can earn fair returns for their efforts and thus expand their capacity to effectively support population education programmes, and
- **request** the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of UNFPA to bring this Declaration and the Action Framework to the attention of the International Conference on Population and Development to be organized under the auspices of the United Nations in 1994 in Cairo.