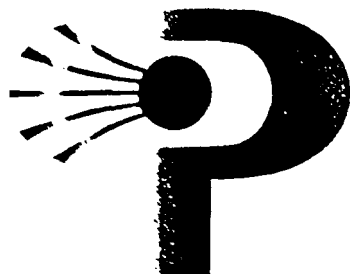


## Statement to the Hague Forum 8-12 February 1999

As written

[Will read parts marked with brackets]



International Union for the Scientific Study of Population  
Union Internationale pour l'Étude Scientifique de la Population  
Unión Internacional para el Estudio Científico de la Población  
国际人口科学联盟

الاتحاد الدولي للدراسات العلمية للسكان

www.iussp.org **IUSSP**

The IUSSP was founded in 1928 as a result of the first World Population Conference held in Geneva in 1927. After World War II it was reorganised as an independent international association of individual scholars. The IUSSP is guided by a constitution that aims to promote the science of demography by fostering relations between demographers in all countries of the world and stimulating interest in demographic matters among governments, national and international organisations, scientific bodies, and the general public.

Today the IUSSP has about 2000 members in more than 120 countries. It convenes general population conferences every four years; the last meeting was held in Beijing in 1997, and Brazil will host the next one in 2001. It also organises regional conferences and frequent specialised seminars around the world. The union's work is structured around eight substantive committees and a number of working groups focusing on topics such as economic demography, gender and population, reproductive health, AIDS, and ageing.

The IUSSP, as the single and foremost association of population scientists from a variety of disciplinary, professional, and geographical backgrounds, is particularly well suited to contributing to the framing of population policy in an objective way, in that no one ideology or school of thought dominates within the IUSSP, and its members represent the science before they represent any other special interest group.

## ***The Importance of Scientific Analysis in Informing International Policy***

The process of formulating international policy statements is necessarily informed by a wide array of considerations, including ethical, cultural, and ideological principles. Yet scientific analysis is an indispensable basis for any solid policy, providing, among other things:

- *Accurate information about current conditions and recent demographic and social trends.* Scientific methods are a key tool in producing, assessing, and resolving conflicts over such information.
- *Assessments of what is known about the past determinants and future projections of trends and conditions.* Recognising uncertainty and the limits of knowledge about the factors influencing population-related trends is as important as understanding what is known.
- *Assessments of the possible consequences of trends and conditions.* The social, economic, and environmental consequences of demographic trends remain important considerations in population policy. The potential importance of interactions and feedbacks emphasises the need for careful analysis.
- *An evaluation of the possible consequences of alternative population policies.* Alternative scenarios need to be defined and simulations be carried out before implementation of policies.
- *An evaluation of the implications of contemporary macro conditions and changes on population policies, processes, and parameters.* Such an ongoing evaluation is particularly important in the context of the rapid and often uncontrollable process of globalisation that links groups and regions in completely unanticipated ways today.

- A series of open debates in which proponents of differing views as well as scientists from different fields meet each other and discuss controversial issues in a scholarly manner. These debates shall be documented and distributed widely.
- A series of short state-of-the-art reports on current knowledge on issues relevant to population and development policy. These reports would be authored by recognised experts in the field and could include a synthesis of the vast literature in areas considered important in this assessment.
- A series of regional workshops with a focus on the great heterogeneity of experience and outlook across regions and groups. These workshops would place special emphasis on the identification of the specific socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental conditions of the observed past developments and of anticipated future trends.
- A comprehensive assessment report synthesising the most important new insights gained and with an emphasis on policy implications shall be produced and widely distributed, possibly before the next World Population Conference in 2004.

Funding for this process still needs to be raised from national and international authorities and donor agencies. It is in the interest of agencies active in the field of population to ensure that their policies are based on the best scientific understanding of the complex interactions in which the population variable is embedded, and that policies focus on likely future conditions rather than outdated experiences.