

The Preface by Steve Sinding for the Supplement with four PAA papers.

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More than three years have passed since the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo. At last spring's annual meeting of the Population Association of America, I thought it would be useful to ask four experts, each with a distinctive perspective on the ICPD and its aftermath, to reflect on its significance and its accomplishments, now that much of the dust has settled. The following papers are the product of that inquiry. Individually, they represent a rich tapestry of insights and observations. Collectively, they are a microcosm of the many points of agreement, and the smaller number of disagreements, that today characterize Cairo's post-mortem. Fred Sai, the permanent chairman of the Cairo conference and the principal steward of its remarkable consensus, reminds us of the many advances made at Cairo, in expanding the definition of services from family planning to reproductive health, in defining more precisely than ever before the specific development approaches that most influence reproductive outcomes, and in emphasizing the central role of women's status and empowerment in the population equation. He argues that, rather than setting the demographic agenda back, Cairo enriched and expanded it. Jack Caldwell takes a somewhat different tack on the demographic impact question, arguing that the effect of the organized women's movement on the Cairo programme of action was to shift attention from reducing high fertility rates and rates of population growth to improving women's reproductive health and individual wellbeing - a shift that he predicts will reduce Western aid for family planning and reproductive health programs to the detriment of Africa, in particular. Adrienne Germain, a central figure in the women's health movement, maintains that Cairo represents a retreat from population policy only if one defines such policy in an overly narrow way. If one sees population policy in the broad sense of promoting reproductive freedom as well as a series of actions in other development sectors that reinforce low desired fertility, Cairo was very much a demographic conference. She chides demographers for their propensity to define population policy solely in terms of demographic targets and contraceptive goals. Finally, Alaka Basu warns that a new orthodoxy - reproductive health - replaced the older neo-Malthusian orthodoxy at Cairo. She laments that the new orthodoxy is harder to attack because it is cloaked in the language of human rights and universal egalitarian and altruistic goals. Yet, she argues, the new orthodoxy of

women's health and rights has yet to pass the empirical test: does the evidence suggest that it will produce the desired demographic outcomes and will it result in healthier, better off individuals and families? Basu presents a framework for assessing the many tradeoffs that policymakers must face in choosing among the programmatic alternatives. There is no question that Cairo changed the landscape of population policy. But the jury is out on whether the road to population stabilization will be made easier or more difficult to build through the changed terrain. These four authors offer their opinions (and predictions) on this question. In so doing, they have posed very well the questions that must be answered before the next global population conference, which, if tradition is obeyed, will be held in 2004.