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# Population & Habitat Update

A bi-monthly newsletter of the National Audubon Society's Population & Habitat Campaign

## CAIRO+5: IDENTIFYING SUCCESSES, NEW CHALLENGES

RHONDA SCHLANGEN

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Since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the global economic crisis, spread of HIV-AIDS, and growing evidence of the link between toxins and reproductive health have posed new challenges to global population and development efforts. Representatives of 177 nations and scores of non-governmental organizations gathered at the United Nations from March 24-31 to assess progress on implementation of the ICPD *Programme of Action* and to consider new challenges to population, the environment, and development. The meeting was part of a UN process to review the implementation of the *Programme of Action* and identify successes, failures and future needs.

Throughout the process, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working to ensure that the review document reflects the priorities and perspective of civil society. Many NGOs formed coalitions, or "caucuses," to strengthen their collective efforts.

The Environmental Caucus, brought together by the National Audubon Society, worked to strengthen the language in the review document relating to the environment. About sixteen NGO representatives from Mexico, the Netherlands, Japan, Ukraine, the United States, and other countries worked together to formulate the caucus' priorities, draft the caucus statement which was presented to the government meeting, and educate government delegates and other NGO representatives about the caucus' concerns.

In particular, the environmental caucus worked to articulate the connections between environment and the priorities of the ICPD *Programme of Action*, such as health, quality of life, and development. "We cannot address access to food, water safety, and migration without addressing the environment as well," says the statement issued by the Environmental Caucus. "A healthy environment should be a priority when seeking to address human health and welfare."

The Preparatory Committee will meet again in mid-May to complete work on the review document. Among the sections of the draft text that remain to be discussed are those dealing with international funding of programs, partnerships between governments and civil society, and providing resources for reproductive health programs aimed at serving adolescents.

The final document will be presented to a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, scheduled to run from June 30 through July 2.

The final statement of the environmental caucus can be found at <http://www.undp.org/popin/unpopcom/32ndsess/state.htm>, listed under section B as "Statement of the ICPD + 5 Environmental Caucus."

