

**Statement to the Commission on Population and Development**  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Session, March 1999**

**As written**

*Address*

*by*

*The Polish delegation to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the U.N. Commission on Population and  
Development*

*New York, 22-24 March 1999*

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At first, I would like to congratulate you as well as other members of the Bureau for being elected.

My delegation appreciates very much well prepared "Concise Report on Population Growth, Structure and Distribution" (E/CN.9/1999/2) as well as "Report of the Secretary General on World Demographic Trends" (E/CN.9/1999/5). Both documents provide the evidence of an excellent work of the Population Division. In Poland as well as in other European Countries with economies in Transition it is observed significant change of demographic process.

Rapid demographic changes have been taking place in Poland in the 1990s. They are running parallel to socio-economic transformation which brings growth of the GDP, drop of the inflation level, increase of the share of services in the GDP, with simultaneous fall of the share of industrial and agricultural production. The unemployment rate has been showing a declining tendency. However a considerable stratification of the standard of living of society has to be noted.

The ongoing socio-economic transformation influences changes in the family formation, procreation and matrimonial patterns, which are expressed in the postponement of entering into first marriage and in the drop of female fertility. It is linked to the growing interest in expanding the education level, social stratification, and differentiation in the professional status of the young generation of males and females. Difficulties in the access to own housing are the factor that limits the possibility of entering into marriages and having children.

The growth rate of the population has been systematically declining. In 1998, it dropped to the lowest level after World War Two, down to 0.6 promilles. The process of population reproduction below the replacement level has consolidated since 1989. It results from the considerable drop in the total fertility rate, which amounted in 1998 to 1.4 child per female in the reproduction age.

The health condition of the Polish society is perceived as unsatisfactory. The mortality rate in Poland is relatively high, especially among males in the age groups between 35 and 64. In 1997, the average life expectancy at birth of male (68.5) and female (77.0) achieved the highest rate in the period after World War Two. The infant mortality rate has been decreasing systematically, reaching the 10.2 promille level in 1997. But it is still almost two times higher than in some of the European countries.

The demographic situation in Poland is characterized by a considerable fluctuation of the population phenomena and processes. It is manifested by considerable time changeability of population groups according to age, which creates serious social and economic problems.

Transformations in the age structure of the population envisaged till the year 2000 are perceived by the Polish government as a serious problem for the socio-economic policy. In the years 1995-2020, changes taking place in the age structure will result in the fluctuation of the number of children and youth in school age and have an important impact on the education system.

Significant population increase in the working age in the years 1996-2010 and the ageing of the population in the working age deserve particular attention in the assessment of the prospects of demographic growth in Poland. It is envisaged that the increase of population in the working age in Poland will be the highest among all of the European countries in this period and will constitute over one-fourth (26.8%) of the total European growth of this population. Proper mechanisms have been started and activities adopted in the economic field to create new jobs mainly through the preservation of the high pace of the economic growth.

Since the size of the population in the post-working age will increase by about 50 per cent in the years 1995-2020, the reform of the old-age pension system was introduced as of January 1, 1999.

The current priorities in the socio-economic policy of the government include:

- 1) the systemic reform of the State, introduced as of January 1, 1999, based on a three-level administrative division of the country to help introduce of all reforms,
  - 2) implementation of the old-age pension system reform, based on a three-level system of old-age and disability benefits, with one of them based on a capital formula,
  - 3) implementation of the health protection system reform, improving the system and increasing the efficiency of resources appropriated for health protection,
  - 4) implementation of the education system reform, linked to the necessity of increasing the education level of the young generation and its adaptation to the requirements of the labor market,
  - 5) reduction of unemployment through the continuation of economic growth,
  - 6) creation and implementation of a pro-family program aimed at supporting the family in fulfilling its basic tasks.
- The reform of the education system was prepared and is supposed to be introduced in the school year 1999/2000. It consists of:
    - the necessity to meet the growing needs and challenges resulting from Poland's integration with the European Union,
    - the requirement of changing the education system resulting from the systemic reform of the state.

The reform of the education system provides important teaching program

changes that will pay more attention among others to the following assumptions:

- pro-family education through proper upbringing and education in family and in school and promotion of proper models of family life.

Preparing the program of the education system reform, the Polish government assumed that the modern development of the countryside and small urban communities could be expanded mainly through the growth of the education level of their population. The adopted model of a three-level education system (elementary school, grammar school, and high school) is an important systemic solution.

Mr. Chairman

The increase of population and structural changes are taken into consideration by the Polish government is shaping the policy of socio-economic development in order to secure a continuing and balanced growth. The Polish

government perceives the current pace of population increase as unsatisfactory and conducts a policy aimed at its growth. The government adopts actions for the increase of population through the promotion of activities in the pro-family policy that will indirectly influence the level of fertility.

The activities adopted by the Polish government take into account the recommendations of the Program of Action of the Cairo Conference. The position of the Government in this scope was presented in two documents:

1) *The Concept of Implementation in Poland of the Program of Activity of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994,*

which received the approval of the Government in 1996. The document contains the guidelines of actions in the implementation of recommendations of the Program of Action of the Cairo Conference embracing the priority fields of operation:

- the improvement of the health condition of the population and the limitation of civilization diseases,
- the socio-economic policy directed especially for the family
- investing in human capital,
- monitoring foreign migration.

2) *In annual Reports on the „Demographic situation in Poland” worked out by the Government Population Council,*

that are presented to the Government, Parliament, Provincial Governors and institutions concerned. The Report contains conclusions resulting from current and envisaged demographic processes and phenomena. The report directs concrete tasks for implementation by proper ministries.

Thank you for your attention