

Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Poland I am honored to address the 52nd session of the Commission on Population and Development.

At the beginning, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as President of the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development, as well as other members of the Bureau on your election.

This Session comes at a very challenging time and coincides with 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. It is also an important opportunity to celebrate the anniversary of Cairo Conference. The historic significance of the Cairo Conference was underscored by the new paradigm giving due attention to the centrality of women's rights in the development process and by recognition that education was key to enabling people to claim their rights, make choices for their lives and advance development. That concept was reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform of Action and Millennium Development Goal 3.

Mr Chairman,

The ICPD Programme of Action constitutes a platform for the present and future activity for the Polish Government. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development opens new chapter of possibilities and actions to accelerate and sustain development in Poland. In order to counteract the observed demographic transitions there are many actions within the public health and healthcare system domains, which should contribute to improve the situation. In Poland everyone

has the **right for health** protection. All Polish citizens, regardless of their social or economic situation, have equal access to health care services financed by the public funds. The range of these services is defined by law.

Currently in Poland there is an ongoing debate on **public health** and its crucial role for economic and social development of state. New legal frames were established by the Act of 11th September 2015 on public health and its operational policy paper - the *National Health Programme for 2016-2020*. This Act introduces coordination mechanisms to reinforce leadership in public health and increase efficiency. The *National Health Programme* is to support the existing health care system funded from the public budget and focused primarily on treatment of diseases with less attention given to educational and preventive interventions. The Program attributes a more prominent role to publicly funded evidence-based health promotion, prevention, and the concept of health in all public policies. Moreover, the *National Health Programme* identifies operational objectives which contribute to the overall strategic objective, such as increasing life expectancy, improving health and health related quality of life, including **reproductive health**, and reducing social inequalities in health. A significant initiative worth to be mentioned in this field is the **Programme for complex protection of reproductive health in Poland 2016-2020**.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland ensures special protection by the State over pregnant women. **Reproductive health** is a crucial element of the State health policy.

Given the need to provide women during pregnancy, at labor and postpartum with the best possible services, the Minister of Health issued a number of regulations concerning the health of children and women, including that of 16 August 2018 on organisational standard of perinatal health care. The new standard does not only refer to physiological pregnancy and physiological

childbirth, thus many of its provisions will be applicable also in cases of temporary perinatal complications. It puts a special emphasis on organization of antenatal education, breastfeeding support, labor pain relieving, as well as work guidelines for medical staff in cases particularly difficult for women and their families, such as miscarriage or birth of a dead or seriously ill child.

Poland's activities in the area of obstetric care are still fundamentally aimed at steadily reducing maternal, newborn and infant mortality rates. It is mainly achieved through creating a three-stage perinatal care system that perform functions related to managing network of collaborating facilities, treating patients, providing consultations, ensuring the information flow, maintaining and coordinating transport of mothers and newborns, and education.

The results of epidemiological studies clearly indicate a systematic improvement in the health of Poles. There is a rising trend in life expectancy, the decline in mortality from most causes, and in infant mortality. Bearing in mind that the infant mortality rate together with the perinatal mortality rate are one of the principal indicators of society's cultural and civilizational development, they also constitute in Poland crucial indicators of society's state of health. One of the biggest success of Poland in recent decades was reduction in the number of lung cancers' diagnosis, especially among young, middle-aged men.

Poland is a low HIV / AIDS prevalence country, with a stable epidemiological situation. Since the implementation of the research in 1985 there were 23 656 HIV infections detected in Poland. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Poland is estimated at around 12 000 (2017). All HIV positive patients and those suffering from AIDS who fulfill the medical and legal criteria are covered

by a high efficacy ARV treatment program being implemented as part of the national strategy on preventing HIV infections and combating AIDS.

Distinguished Delegates,

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda coincided with the works on the national development strategy in Poland, called Strategy for Responsible Development. The new development model for Poland set in the Strategy is convergent with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. The ambitious vision of the world free from poverty, in which everybody does benefit from sustainable development, expressed in the 2030 Agenda, is both, our vision and our goal.

The development policy implemented in Poland, one whose vision and goals have been defined in the **Responsible Development Strategy** (the long-term development strategy being implemented since February 2017) **consistently reflects the goals of the 2030 Responsible Development Agenda**. We espouse both the idea and practice of sustainable development, one which takes into account social, economic and environmental dimensions of development processes.

This strategy introduced a new development model – the one which stresses responsible development, under which the sources of competitive advantages come from new growth factors and **which assures access to the fruits of this growth for all social groups living in the entire country**. In our policy, we also **focus on satisfying the needs of the present generation without reducing the opportunities of the future generations** to satisfy their own needs.

The economic and social policy pursued in Poland brings about a dynamic economic growth and more equitable distribution of its fruits between capital

and labor, while taking into account the vital needs of both the pre-working age residents and those who have already finished their careers. The years 2017-2018 were very beneficial for our country in this respect, with the GDP growth rate of approximately 5% being one of the highest in the EU. However, the essence of our development model takes into account the quality of the economic growth and the importance of the development processes for Poland's residents.

Within the process of **monitoring the implementation of the Agenda 2030, the Council of Ministers adopted in 2018, the document entitled Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Poland. Report 2018** was submitted by the **Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology** which coordinates in Poland the 2030 Responsible Development Agenda's implementation activities with respect to individual Sustainable Development Goals. The 2018 Report aimed at assessing Poland's implementation of sustainable development objectives, as defined in the **UN Resolution - Transforming our world: the 2030 Responsible Development Agenda**. The document was presented by the **Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology, at the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York on July 17, 2018.**

Mr. Chairman,

The priority of the economic and social policy pursued in Poland is concerned the reduction of social exclusion, poverty and all kinds of social inequalities, also in their territorial dimension. The ultimate goal of all activities is to improve the quality of life of citizens. Poland counteracts inequalities in a comprehensive manner. Actions are being implemented to provide financial support to families, support women and the elderly on the labor market, socio-professional inclusion of disabled people and improve the quality of life for

seniors, as well as equalize the development opportunities of people living in smaller urban centers. **The situation on Polish labor market continues to improve.** In January 2019 registered unemployment rate came to 6.2%. **Such a low level of registered unemployment rate hasn't been observed since 1992, i.e. during whole history of Polish post - transition market economy.** Activity and employment rates growth of Polish citizens is a result of improvement of job quality, in particular – accelerating of wage growth observed since 2017.

One of the most important subject areas of the current government's action is **family policy**. A well-functioning family creates better conditions for life and development, it guarantees the upbringing of healthy and educated children. Support for families through family policy instruments is an investment in human capital and in the future leads to higher social well-being. Under the family benefits system, parents are entitled to three groups of benefits: family allowance with supplements, benefits connected to a birth and nursing benefits. Families are provided with benefits connected to a birth of child in form of: one-off birth allowance, allowance adopted in a resolution by the commune. Number of large families under the family benefit system was 236 000 in 2017. Expenses on family allowances for large families, and help for single-parent families are important part of the family support system. The income criteria of the Child Maintenance Fund Benefit (in case parent does not pay alimony set by the court) will increase up to PLN 800 (about 190 Euro) per person per month from October 2019. Since 2015, the number of families at risk of poverty has been decreasing. The largest improvement in the financial situation occurred among single-parents families. Among this group, the extreme poverty rate amounted to 2.5% and decreased by 3.1 pp. in comparison to 2016. In 2017, the poverty rate of single parents families in the countryside amounted to 0.7%, while in relation to the previous year it dropped by approx. 90% , from the level of 7.3%.

Our flagship programme is “Family 500+” programme - the basic instrument for improving the dignity of Polish families. The Family 500+ Programme (i.e. the child care benefit) is an innovative, systematic, long-term support for families in Poland, that came into force on April 1st, 2016. It aims at improving the financial situation of families and creating conditions to facilitate the decisions on family growth. It is regularly paid PLN 500 (around 120 Euro) a month for every second and subsequent child up to the age of 18 in the family, regardless of income as well as for children in foster care. From July 2019, the benefit will become fully universal, independent from the family income.

The programme pursues three objectives:

- A pronatalist objective - expects to increase the birth rate and the fertility rate.
- Investment in human capital - the idea of building a competitive society, society equipped with the knowledge and skills, through ensuring that children receive solid education, adequate nutrition and medical treatment.
- Reducing poverty among the youngest, in particular in large families.

The Programme builds citizens' trust in state institutions. A significant reduction in extreme child poverty has contributed to this. In 2016 - 2017 child poverty decreased by almost a half - from 9 % (in 2015) to 4.7% in 2017.

The "**Good Start**" Programme, initiated in 2018, introduced an annual, one-off benefit in the amount of PLN 300 (about 70 Euro) in connection with the start of the school year.

The "**Toddler +**" Programme is being implemented, the aim of which is to co-finance the creation and maintenance of childcare facilities for children up to the age of 3. This promotes women's return to work and the development of children.

Act on retirement for mothers who gave birth and / or brought up at least four children. The benefit is to be granted to mothers who, because long-term taking care of children, did not earn a minimum pension.

Equal opportunities are offered in the "**Access Plus**" program adopted in 2018. The aim of the program is to improve the quality of life and ensure the independence of life for all citizens, including the elderly and people with permanent or temporary limitations and disabilities. This is to be served by the improvement of the accessibility of public space, products and services in the aspect of architecture, information and communication.

Educational opportunities and improving skills are a strong factor conducive to socio-economic mobility and are crucial in eliminating inequalities. Therefore, the Government conducts activities for the development of vocational education and improvement of higher education. At the end of January this year The Council of Ministers adopted the document "Integrated Skill Strategy 2030 - general part". Changes in the structure of education, including vocational education, meet the challenges related to shape among students the skills of independent, creative and critical thinking and the ability to learn independently at every stage of life.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Improving the quality of life is possible due to the sustainable use of natural resources. Poland ensures the implementation of SDGs at the national level by including them in the most important strategic documents shaping the social, environmental and economic development of the country. The Strategy for Responsible Development refers to them. It will be implemented by 9 sectoral policies. One of them is the **National Ecological Policy** with an outlook to 2030. This policy develops the environmental area of SRD and will implement 11 out of 17 SDGs. This approach will ensure both the continuation of current activities in the field of the environment and the appropriate rank of the implementation process in the 2030 horizon.

Thank you for your attention,