



PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA
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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**At the General Debate on the special theme of the 52nd Session of the
Commission on Population and Development**

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(Check against delivery)

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to address on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Twenty-five years ago the Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo and broke new ground in terms of the international community's efforts to advance key aspects of human development, including within its provisions the fields of empowerment of women and girls, education, infant, child and maternal mortality, and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. For the first time in an international consensus document, states agreed that reproductive rights embrace certain human rights recognised at the national and international level.

The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services. This position is also reflected in the European Consensus on Development (a framework for action for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States).

In the intervening years since 1994 there have been many advances to celebrate – but there also remain hurdles and challenges ahead. For example, every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. This is a particular tragedy since we know many of the services that could prevent maternal mortality are low-cost, cost-effective and feasible to integrate into the health system.

As we collectively reaffirm the achievements secured 25 years ago, and their follow-up, the international community needs to further invigorate the implementation of Cairo, and the Declaration adopted by this Commission today should provide added impetus in this regard.

We would add that the outcome of the reviews of the Programme of Action provide additional guidance and are needed to accelerate its implementation. We welcome the outcomes of the regional review conferences, including in 2018 in the lead-up to ICPD+25.

The focus of this year's CPD – actions for further implementation of the PoA and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - could not be more timely, given the intrinsic link between the

Cairo commitments and the implementation of the SDGs. The three reports of the Secretary General provide valuable analysis of the trends and developments that have marked the period since the Programme of Action was adopted and map how those trends might develop in the coming years. From urbanisation to substantially reduced child mortality, changing age structures in general and population ageing in particular, burgeoning migration and the impact of climate change, new challenges and opportunities are opening up on a global scale. The recommendations contained in the reports set out valuable new ways in which to take forward the implementation of Cairo and, in lockstep, the SDGs and the leaving no-one behind agenda, including the strengthening of data processes and quality and measures to boost health equity and quality education. Spreading knowledge and encouraging debates about prevailing population dynamics remains crucial.

Human rights are at the heart of both the SDGs and the Cairo commitments. Ensuring the respect, protection and fulfillment of universal human rights for all, gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, and ending discrimination and racism in all its forms, as well as preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, including through the engagement of men and boys, as well as working for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, is an absolute necessity for the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The EU is committed to the full realisation of the Programme of Action within our own borders and to supporting others in their endeavours towards that goal. Much of the EU's development assistance and that of its Member States is addressing directly or indirectly priorities enshrined in Cairo.

Examples include: the delivery of 1.5 billion euro over the past 6 years to support bilateral health programmes in 17 countries; the fact that 30% of EU health aid is spent on sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health; the new flagship EU-UN "Spotlight" initiative which commits 500 million euro to the elimination of violence against women and girls.

The European Consensus for Development sets out a new framework for the delivery of development assistance by the EU and its member states, coherently aligned to the SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are anchored in the European Consensus as key drivers and preconditions for sustainable development. The EU and its Member States intend to provide input on the impact of their action in support of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

In conclusion, the EU is determined to work for a world where the Cairo commitments have become a living reality for all, in partnership with others at the national, regional and international levels – including civil society, whose role is instrumental in this regard.

Thank you.