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General Statement of the Republic of Hungary

by

H.E. Mr. Miklós Soltész,

Minister of State

Ministry of National Resources of the Republic of Hungary

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Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Hungary I would like to thank you for the comprehensive presentation delivered by the President of ECOSOC, Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe. Hungary aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. In my national capacity I would like to make a few additional comments, to highlight the importance of this year's ministerial review "Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education".

The Hungarian Government considers education, reproduction and their impact on development as key priorities. Over the past decades Hungary as many other countries has experienced a fertility rate below replacement level. In 2010, it was 1.26 per woman, the lowest ever. Further, it is predicted that by 2050 over half of the Hungarian population will be over 65 years of age. A growing ageing population and a continuously low fertility rate are our main challenges, which are among the biggest obstacles for Hungary's sustainable and long term development.

Mr. Chair,

Hungary strongly believes in the importance of education in shaping the future population trends. We need to draw attention to the role of education in preparing individuals and couples not only about their sexual and reproductive health but also about their family responsibilities and childbearing.

In order to raise fertility rates we are engaged in supporting women and men to reconcile their family and professional life on the national and European level. The Hungarian Government has put family policy among its top priorities. In relation to this I would like to mention 2 of our measures. Firstly, in recognition of the costs of raising children we have introduced the family based taxation system in Hungary. Secondly, in connection to education we have made universal benefits after children contingent on school attendance, so in case of a certain amount of unjustified absence from school, the benefit is suspended.

Hungary is committed to develop a family friendly socio-economic environment through comprehensive policy measures, therefore we would welcome best practices from around the world. At the same time we would like to invite the international community to address/reflect on the challenges of low fertility countries as well.

Thank you for your attention.