



Statement by Mr. Gheorghe Leucă, Deputy Director for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, at the 48th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development, New York

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the Commission and to welcome the efforts to build up a strong political support for integrating population issues into sustainable development, including the post-2015 development agenda, which constitutes a step forward in realizing the future we want. I would also like to commend the work of the Secretary General in informing the Commission on the global demographic situation, its trends and projections for the upcoming years and in this way assisting the member states in making informed decisions on mainstreaming this important dimension in the global agenda.

Being aware that the world population is expected to increase to about 8.4 billion people by 2030, which is an addition of 15% to the current global situation, the international community must seriously analyze and understand all the changes that are likely to unfold over the next 15 years and prepare to meet the needs of a population that is growing constantly and is eager to achieve higher standards of living, while being mindful about the impact of the human activities and the increasing population on the environment. Demographic increase has a negative effect on the environment due to a bigger demand for natural resources and greater risks of pollution and in these conditions it is getting much harder to thrive or even in some cases to survive.

No doubt, today's world is far richer than it used to be 50 years ago, with an average standard of living far better compared to not so long ago. At the same time, the gap between the rich and the poor is also growing and if we are to achieve sustainable development we must particularly address gaps and inequalities because a richer world doesn't mean a better one.

Along with the experience of the MDGs implementation such challenges have shown once again that development oriented on the growth is not entirely suitable, and that a new development approach and comprehensive strategies and policies are needed at the international, regional and national level, including in the field of population in order to tackle social, economic and environmental issues.

Unlike the global tendency, the Republic of Moldova is among the countries facing unfavorable demographic trends, with a rapidly decreasing population triggered by migration, low birth rates and aging. The preliminary results of the most recent population census held in the country with the support of the UNFPA in Moldova last May showed a population decrease of almost 25% in the last 10 years. This is a truly drastic change which impacts all aspects of life and economic planning in the country.

It is in this context that the Government has prioritized its policies and strategies aimed at strengthening social protection system and expanding its coverage, accelerating progress on health-related reforms and ensuring quality health for all, stimulating job creation through the

diversification of activities, especially in green economy and sustainable agriculture, as well as improving the education system, orienting it to requirements of the job market.

In the same vein, in recent years the Government has taken sustained efforts to empower its population and to make the best decisions when it comes to transformation, reforms, establishment of a clear development paradigm and a sense of direction. In June last year Moldova signed the Association Agreement with the EU which is an important milestone in the country's development path. Building on this partnership, many projects aimed at developing the road infrastructure, the energy security, the mobility of people, the health system and many other vital sectors have been launched, all of them having the potential to create a favorable environment for economic growth and population development. The transformation is only expected to enhance with the advancement in the implementation of the aforementioned agreement.

As the Republic of Moldova is mostly an agricultural country, sustainable agriculture and rural development are at the core of its development. Under the circumstances when the rural labour productivity is the greatest asset that keeps population out of poverty, our main objective is to transform agriculture from a source of income to sustain people's livelihood and halt pauperization to a business opportunity based on sustainable competitive agriculture services in the region.

From this perspective we are developing an effective partnership with the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) which will help us to reinforce farm subsidies programmes and infrastructure development to foster agricultural trade and market integration and in parallel we are advancing cooperation with the UN agencies, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agriculture and Development to strengthen the national capacities to implement the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU and prepare the local farmers to adapt to the EU agricultural product quality standards and increase their competitiveness.

Mr. Chairman,

Partnership is the key to addressing population challenges in the implementation of sustainable development goals. The new agenda will have to tackle population growth and its increased demands, but it will also have to ensure that it illustrates the population patterns with the differentiated solutions for countries with decreasing population like the Republic of Moldova.

And our vision in this sense for an all encompassing agenda is to treat population challenges through a human rights perspective that is to promote human rights of migrants, secure universal reproductive health, empower women and girls, and advance youth participation and inclusion. Committing to ambitious targets and indicators in that respect, as well as delivering effectively on these goals will help address inequalities and bridge the gaps between the rich and the poor. This is very much in line with the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) through which it was underlined that ending discrimination and mainstreaming human rights for all, including for women and girls, is an absolute necessity for the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication. We believe and corroborate that this important aspect, along with other major objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action needs to be fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

I thank you.