

Statement
by
H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the
United Nations

at
the General Debate of the 54th session of the Commission on Population and
Development

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Mr. Chair,

Allow me to begin by expressing Bulgaria's gratitude to you, the other members of the Bureau and the two co-facilitators for your leadership, guidance and tireless efforts to organize and carry out this session, as well as to achieve consensus on the resolution on this year's special theme.

The Commission on Population and Development is the only UN intergovernmental forum mandated to focus on the ICPD Programme of Action and the full extent of population and development issues. Its role and importance are even more pertinent now when the world is faced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's special theme of the Commission is most relevant and timely, as around the world, the pandemic is having a devastating impact on health systems, food systems, economies and the lives, livelihood and wellbeing of all. Women and girls are especially affected.

Responding effectively to this fast-growing pandemic requires solidarity and cooperation among all governments and stakeholders. The full and effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and of the outcomes of its review conferences is essential. The full realization of all human rights for all, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are of paramount importance. We need to address food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, thus contributing to the implementation of Agenda 2030. It is crucial to oppose multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as to eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, which have become a pandemic in themselves.

Sexual and reproductive health of women and adolescents is a global challenge significantly influenced by nutrition and food security. The recent progress towards ending hunger by 2030 is jeopardized by the COVID-19 pandemic, exposing the world population to the heavy impact of multiple and overlapping burdens of malnutrition. The picture presented by the SG report on population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development is bleak and requires urgent action.

Nutrition is closely related to maternal and newborn health and adolescent health. In this regard, I would like to share one national example. Bulgaria has developed special

recommendations to assist medical professionals, as well as pregnant and lactating women in the formation and observance of healthy diets.

Additionally, the sexual and reproductive health is impacted by food security problems such as: high rate of urbanization and lack of availability of healthy food choices in remote areas, poverty and social inequality endangering the affordability of major food groups. Ensuring the functioning of supply chains remains a critical task if we are to provide adequate food security and nutrition.

Mr. Chair,

Food security, nutrition, sustainable development and the health of women and girls are interlinked but there are also other aspects in this equilibrium – agricultural development, trade and education are needed to overcome the challenges. Climate change has had an impact on almost every aspect of our life. We need to take advantage of the Decade of Action and accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the ICPD agenda; we need a holistic approach that would keep in focus all these interlinkages, and we need to leave no one behind while reaching the furthest behind first.

Thank you.