

**STATEMENT BY  
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**ON**

**NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN MEETING THE GOALS AND  
OBJECTIVES RELATED TO POPULATION DEVELOPMENT  
AND EDUCATION IN THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF  
THE ICPD**

**PRESENTED AT THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN  
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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*General statement (Monday, 29 April 2024)*

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Madam Chair, Your Excellency Ambassador Noemi Espinoza Madrid,**

It is indeed a great pleasure for me and the delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina to attend the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. I would like to join the distinguished speakers in congratulating you and the new members of the Bureau for having been elected to the respective positions. I wish you well as you steer the sessions.

We are indeed honoured by this opportunity to share Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action's recommendations on issues pertaining to population development and education as we commemorate 30 years of ICPD.

As we all know, the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is crucial, as women remain equal contributors to socio-economic development of societies whether they are paid for their work or not.

We need to acknowledge all the efforts that women invest in caring for children and *more than ever*, for a growing population **of** older persons. However, we would like to emphasize, that no country can develop if women remain largely excluded from life-long education and equal participation in the labour market.

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, securing a comprehensive environment for inclusion of women is further burdened by its legacy of a post-conflict society.

This is best seen when looking at **women's position in BiH labour market** where as much as 51% of working age women are inactive and an additional 20% are considered unemployed. This means that even though women play a major role in the family and society by mainly taking care of children and the elderly, they often have fewer chances to focus on their own health, education, and career.

There is a need to expand choices, so that women don't have to choose between a career and family life. Bosnia and Herzegovina should take an **intersectional**

approach, by addressing harmful gender stereotypes to limit women's opportunities, by encouraging men to take a more active role in fatherhood and care responsibilities, by improving normative framework and working more closely with the private sector to have more family friendly policies in place.

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**Madam Chair**, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the UNFPA, has taken some steps in this direction, among others, on strengthening the capital of the female population through life-long learning, unlocking the youth potential, sharing unpaid care work and activation of women to join the labour market.

We recognise that for activation and employment in the labour market, the world needs to reduce three barriers for women by providing:

- a) public child care and care for older family members so that women have time to strengthen their capital and build their careers,
- b) free of charge life-long learning aligned with the needs of the labour market, and
- c) equal pay with men.

In response to the **significant youth emigration**, Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to implementing and reinforcing comprehensive youth strategies that establish the essential conditions and supportive environments needed for young people. These efforts aim for the youth to build their lives, unlock financing possibilities, start families, and invest their time, energy, and efforts in the development of the country and their local communities.

It is important to emphasize that **health authorities** in Bosnia and Herzegovina are strategically committed to implementing the organized preventive program targeting the most prevalent cancers, namely cervical, breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer to provide access to preventive services across BiH as part of universal health coverage.

**Madam Chair**, I wish to reaffirm Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, to ensure that women, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities as well as youth have full access to quality education, productive employment, safety and security, universal reproductive health care services and full protection of their rights.

We pledge to achieve demographic resilience in the world of fast demographic changes.

We are also committed to develop evidence-based population policies, including youth strategies that will enable individuals and families to achieve their desired fertility in line with human rights, achieve universal health coverage, and sustain socio-economic development in line with the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25.

In conclusion, I am sharing lessons learned from BiH:

1. Ensure support to building human capital for youth, women, older persons, and persons with disabilities, especially in countries impacted by low fertility, outmigration and rapid ageing
2. Ensure the provision of education including digital and technology learning to all populations
3. Work with state institutions and the private sector to ensure dual education, providing knowledge and skills suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market;
4. Work intensively with youth groups to create the necessary framework, structures and opportunities for young people

Finally, I want to thank UNFPA's country office for the great support to our institutions. We work closely together and it is an example of how collaboration produces excellent results.

Thank you!