



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

Statement by Dr. Elona Hoxha,

Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs

Head of the Albanian Delegation at the

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Albania welcomed the adoption of GA Resolution 65/234 on the assessment of the state of population and development and the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014. The Government of Albania, being aware of widely recognized fact that women and young people are often less able to access their human rights and less likely to gain from the benefits of economic development, is currently focused on implementing strategies to empower this strata of our society.

As an emerging democracy, Albania in its all national developing policies has put a great emphasis on integrating the population and development agendas in its global development approach. During the implementation of its National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013, Albania has made significant progress towards achieving the goal of transforming Albania into a country to fully integrate as soon as possible in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

During the last 5 years Albania has scored remarkable progress towards achieving key MDG targets, including combating extreme poverty and gender inequalities, and improving health and nutrition for all its citizens, including vulnerable groups. Currently a draft of new strategy for the period 2013-2020 is prepared and being circulated among all the stakeholders for additional review and inputs. Also Ministry of Health has also launched for the first time the new programme for free health check up services for the age group for all population from 40 till 65 years

old including reproductive health services. This is in line with the government priority to invest more on prevention programmes and services rather on diseases. The programme will be also beneficial for women belonging to these age group and to empower them and their families for better quality of life.

The government of Albania also has in focus and its priority reducing gender disparities, women empowerment, social inclusion, youth employment and education.

More programmes will be focused on women especially vulnerable groups such as Roma, egyptians, disabled people, poor and trafficked women and children etc. The priority of the government is also the territorial reform that will tackle problems of rural and urban development as well as internal migration. Emphasis will be given on policies on migration on broader domain that includes asylum seekers, combating illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

Regarding the **reproductive health**, special attention is given to improving the quality of health care in the area of Maternal and Child Health, improving the efficiency of National Family Planning Program, as well as strengthening and expanding awareness and community participation in health related programs.

Family planning services, counseling and modern contraceptive methods in primary health care are provided free of charge. Since 2010, the Ministry of Health has achieved complete financial independence in purchasing contraceptives for public health services. All the necessary contraceptives for our public health services are being purchased with funds from the state budget and being provided free of charge.

On July 24, 2012 Ministry of Health launched the 2012 – 2016 National Contraceptive Security Strategy together with its Plan of Action, a result of joint efforts by Albanian and international experts with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Albania. The main purpose of the new Albanian National Contraceptive Security Strategy is to ensure that men and women in Albania can choose, obtain and use modern methods of contraception and high quality family planning services. The strategy aims to increase the demand and access to quality reproductive health and family planning services – through increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate, to reduce the number of abortions and to improve maternal and child health in Albania.

Several running promotional campaigns are launched in the country related to family planning, use of modern contraceptive methods; These campaigns are being organized by the Ministry of Health, Institute of public Health in collaboration with local NGOs and with the support of UNFPA, IPPF, USAID.

The international organizations such as UNFPA and IPPF has supported the government of Albania and civil society through their expertise and support in advocacy, policy documents, programmes in FP with focus on women, vulnerable groups and youth.

Regarding vulnerable groups, it is worth mentioning that in Albania, relevant state structures in cooperation with Roma organizations have created a database with areas inhabited by Roma population (Roma map areas) across the country. Departments of Public Health districts are instructed to pay special attention to the medical treatment of this population; such as the implementation of compulsory vaccination scheme, mother and child care, health/reproductive health education and promotion, hygiene and epidemiological problems of the area inhabited by the community problems such as drinking water, waste removal, etc. Also, with the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Health continues to organize home visits for health promotion and development of Roma children in the two largest districts of Albania: Tirana and Durres.

Speaking on **Ageing**, despite the very encouraging fact that currently Albania has a very young population, we estimate that approximately 10 percent of the population is over 65 years old. Paying due attention to this fact, the Albanian society is taking relevant measures to adapt to the challenges of aging population. These demographic changes are causing new social, economic and health challenges. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Albania consider the health of the elderly a priority and is working to contribute and help active aging of our population, so that Albanians reach old age in good health, are active in society, and independent in their daily life.