

Draft CPD53 national statement

Bulgaria

Mr. Chair,

I would like to begin by expressing Bulgaria's gratitude to the Chair for his leadership and tireless efforts on a draft declaration on population, nutrition, food security, sustainable development and COVID-19. I would also like to thank the other Bureau members and the secretariat for their support and guidance.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States. Following are some additional remarks of importance to my delegation.

Mr. Chair, CPD is the only UN intergovernmental forum mandated to discuss the ICPD Programme of Action and the full extent of population and development issues. In this regard, adopting a negotiated outcome this year on the special theme of food security and nutrition in the context of COVID-19 and ICPD would have been timely and relevant. We regret that the Commission did not reach consensus on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, despite our commitment and joint efforts with other delegations to reach a meaningful outcome. We hope that the discussions during this year's session will form a solid basis for next year's Commission that will continue to consider the theme of population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development.

As outlined in the UN State of Food Security and Nutrition around the World report, released on July 13th, 2020, over two billion people today suffer from malnutrition. Those suffering from hunger are at greater risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms as a result of associated health conditions, such as malnutrition and non-communicable diseases, which compromise the immune system. They are often trapped in poverty and do not have access to health services, water and sanitation facilities, or indeed the space to quarantine or practice social distancing. Therefore, the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition cannot be underestimated.

Around the world, the pandemic is having a devastating impact on health systems, economies and the lives, livelihood and wellbeing of all. Responding effectively to this fast-growing pandemic requires solidarity and cooperation among all governments and other stakeholders. In the wake of one of most daunting challenges of our lifetime, we believe that the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of its review conferences is essential. We firmly believe that 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 amid this COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The pandemic is reinforcing the economic case for investing in strong and inclusive health systems, promoting universal health coverage and building resilience in the face of public health emergencies such as COVID-19. Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights is integral to achieving Universal health coverage and progress toward 2030 Agenda. Access to sexual and reproductive health care services and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes are critical to achieving the ICPD agenda.

On May 6th, 2020, mindful on the exacerbating impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, my government along with 58 other governments clearly stated in a joint ministerial statement the importance of *protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights and promoting gender-responsiveness in the COVID-19 Crisis*.

Mr. Chair, we are hopeful that improved methods of work will further enable us to reach consensus at next year's session, as we will review extensively this critical theme of "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development." You can rest assured of our government commitment and determination to these essential issues.

Thank you!