

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Poland I am honored to address the 53^d Session of the Commission on Population and Development, devoted to *Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*.

At the beginning, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as President of the 53^d Session of the Commission on Population and Development, and other members of the Bureau on their election.

The fifty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development, comes at the time of an unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, than the Polish delegation express solidarity to all countries affected by the pandemic, as well as condolences and sympathy to all the families of the victims of COVID-19.

We express concern that the COVID-19 pandemic presents a threat to human health, safety and well-being, that it has unprecedented and multifaceted effects, including the severe disruption to sustainable development, global trade and travel, and food and agricultural systems, that it exacerbates inequalities, and that it is expected to have a devastating impact on the food security, nutrition, health, livelihoods and dignity of the human person. The poorest and most vulnerable are the most affected by the pandemic and that its impact will have negative repercussions for achieving sustainable development in economic, social and environmental dimensions, in particular in developing countries, including countries in special situations and middle income countries, making the prospect of eradicating poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition as well as achieving food security and sustainable agriculture and ensuring healthy lives by 2030 more difficult.

The 53^d Session of the Commission on Population and Development comes at a very challenging time and coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The historic significance of the Cairo Conference was underscored by the new paradigm giving due attention to the centrality of women's rights in the development process and by recognition that education was key to enabling people to claim their rights, make choices for their lives and advance development. That concept was reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform of Action and Millennium Development Goal 3.

The ICPD Program of Action constitutes a platform for the present and future activity for the Polish Government. Twenty five years of evidence and practice continue to support the critical importance of aligning development policies to the prevailing population trends within a given country. We have no doubt that effective attention to the population and development principles affirmed in the Program of Action will accelerate progress towards many interrelated targets of the SDGs and strengthen the vision and normative values that underpin the holistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Chairman,

The ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has nowadays been well integrated into the concept, priorities, possibilities and actions aimed at accelerating sustain development in Poland.

As to the domain of demography, in order to counteract the observed demographic transitions – including rapid ageing of the population and low fertility there are many actions within the public health and healthcare system domains, which should contribute to improve the situation. In Poland everyone has the **right for health** protection, all Polish citizens, regardless of their social or economic situation, have equal access to health care services financed by the public funds. The range of these services is defined by law.

Currently in Poland there is an ongoing debate on **public health** and its crucial role for economic and social development of state as well as on health-related quality of life of the society. The legal frames were established by the Act of 11th September 2015 on public health and its operational policy paper - the *National Health Program for 2016-2020*. The Act on public health introduces coordination mechanisms to reinforce leadership in public health and increase efficiency.

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The program attributes a more prominent role to publicly funded evidence-based health promotion and prevention, and the concept of health in all public policies. Moreover the *National Health Program* identifies operational objectives which contribute to the overall strategic objective, what is increasing life expectancy, improving health and health related quality of life, including reproductive health, and reducing social inequalities in health. The extension of the Program is under consideration.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland ensures special protection by the State over pregnant women. **Reproductive health** is a crucial element of the State health policy. The Government of Poland strives to provide women during pregnancy and at labor with the best health services that match their expectations and the medical knowledge. The protection of women in the period of pregnancy, labor and postpartum is ensured in the national legislation and in international agreements ratified by Poland.

Given the need to provide women during pregnancy, at labour and postpartum with the best possible services, the Minister of Health issued a number of laws concerning the health of children and women. One of them is an organisational standard of perinatal health care. The standard determines rules and guidelines of perinatal health care organization for health care providers i.e. during pregnancy, labour, postpartum and the newborn health care. It puts a special emphasis on organization of antenatal education, breastfeeding support, labour pain relieving, as well as work guidelines for medical staff in cases particularly difficult for women and their families, such as miscarriage or birth of a dead or seriously ill child.

Poland's activities in the area of obstetric care are still fundamentally aimed at steadily reducing maternal, newborn and infant mortality rates. It is mainly achieved through creating a three-stage perinatal care system that perform functions related to managing network of collaborating facilities, treating patients, providing consultations, ensuring the information flow, maintaining and coordinating transport of mothers and newborns, and education.

The results of epidemiological studies clearly indicate a systematic improvement in the health of Poles. There is a rising trend in life expectancy, the decline in overall mortality, the decline in mortality from most causes, and in infant mortality. Bearing in mind that the infant mortality rate together with the perinatal mortality rate are one of the principal indicators of society's cultural and civilizational development, they also constitute in Poland crucial indicators of society's state of health.

The Polish government has undertaken a number of actions aimed at raising public awareness of diseases of affluence and their risk factors. Mostly, widespread diseases are related to people's healthy or unhealthy lifestyle choices and behaviors, such as: physical activity, nutritional habits or addictions. One of the biggest success of Poland in recent decades was reduction in the number of lung cancers' diagnosis, especially among young, middle-aged men. There was also visible decrease in the percentage of men who admitted to daily smoking. However, given the constant risk of tobacco-related epidemic and its effect on Polish society and economy, health education activities aimed at young people to prevent them from smoking are still supported.

On 4 February 2020, **the National Oncological Strategy for 2020-2030** was adopted. The strategy states that health issues will be implemented through various activities.

Poland is a low HIV / AIDS prevalence country, with a stable epidemiological situation. Since the implementation of the research in 1985 until 30th of September 2019, there were 25 020 HIV infections reported in Poland. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of infections among men who have sex with men (MSM). All HIV positive patients including those at a risk of marginalization (the inmates, the homeless) who fulfill the medical and legal criteria are covered by a high efficacy ARV treatment program being implemented as part of the national strategy on preventing HIV infections and combating AIDS. Moreover, patients with HIV live longer and enjoy a higher quality of life, which gives them a chance to re-establish their social and family lives.

Distinguished Delegates,

One of the major global challenges the world faces in the 21st century is to ensure food security, i.e. physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a rapidly growing world population. An increase in the world's population, combined with rising incomes and a change in food consumption patterns, where food products of animal origin predominate will, according to FAO forecasts, increase the demand for food by 70% by 2050.

Climate change, poverty, hunger and inequalities are closely interlinked and only a holistic approach to these issues will help to address this problem, especially in the context of the *COVID-19 pandemic*. Therefore, broad cooperation between many countries and the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible is necessary. The ***Partnership for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals***, initiated in 2017, is an example of how this cooperation is being developed in Poland. It is a platform that brings together representatives of various environments in an effort to achieve them. A growing number of people in Poland and worldwide are aware that sustainable development cannot be just an empty slogan. The modern world has a great responsibility for the future of civilization and the state of our planet. Poland has the opportunity to make many positive changes in the country, the region and the world in the context of changes taking place in the global economy. Only joint and effective actions will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland states that it is necessary to implement an agricultural policy which will increase the resilience of agricultural production to adverse phenomena and maintain control over food management sectors bearing importance to national security and guarantee an appropriate level of food self-sufficiency. Food self-sufficiency refers to ensuring that the population is guaranteed basic agri-food products from domestic production, and missing products or those that enrich the food range, especially from other climate zones, can be imported from abroad. Thus, food self-sufficiency should be understood as the ability of the food economy to cover its import expenditure on agri-food products with their export proceeds. The most commonly used measure of a country's food self-sufficiency is the balance of foreign trade in agri-food products and the indicator used by Eurostat.

Poland is characterized by a high agricultural production potential which ensures food self-sufficiency and enables export production. In 2017, the total value of export amounted to PLN 118.7 billion, while in 2005 it was PLN 28.9 billion. A positive phenomenon observed in Polish agriculture is the evolutionary process of rationalization in agricultural structures, professionalization of farming and commercialisation of agricultural production, which facilitates an increase in agricultural productivity .

In 2017, Poland reached a high level of food self-sufficiency (raw materials), measured by the ratio of domestic production to domestic consumption of agricultural products (regardless of their source), in terms of: beef (300.5%), poultry (213.4%), eggs (207.9%), sugar (173.6%), fresh cow's milk (126.8%), basic cereals (119.6%), pork (110.9%), pulses (104.5%), potatoes (104.3%), fruit (104.2%) and vegetables (103.0%). Self-sufficiency rate for vegetable fats and oils was 73.6%, for oilseeds and oleaginous fruit - 78.1%, and for fish and seafood it was low and amounted to merely 52.8%.

State intervention towards agriculture focuses on supporting structural transformations ensuring the increase of its competitiveness, food quality and safety as well as food security of the country, taking environmental requirements into account. At the same time, it is assumed that conditions will be created to diversify business activities, in the direction of acquiring and creating alternative sources of income for the inhabitants of rural areas.

The increase in the competitiveness of farms and agri-food producers will be possible thanks to the improvement of their profitability, integration of the food chain and fairer distribution of added value in this chain based on the principle of partnership. A number of activities will focus on promoting agricultural sector products, including high-quality food, supporting foreign expansion,

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ensuring equal conditions of competition on the EU single market and eliminating barriers particularly burdensome for Polish exports in access to non-EU markets.

The consequence of Poland's accession to the European Union is that agriculture is covered by the regulations of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). EU CAP instruments are crucial in promoting sustainable food production and supporting smallholder farmers.

Poland is marked by a significant share in the area of agricultural land (8%), the number of farms (13%) and the number of people employed in agriculture (19%) in the whole European Union. The share of people employed in the agricultural sector (10.5%) is more than 2 times the EU and OECD average. At the same time, the diversification of employment in rural areas is advancing. Since 2004, Poland has recorded one of the largest reductions in the number of people employed in agriculture in the European Union.

The planned measures should result in the improvement of the area structure in agriculture. An improvement in the ratio of average annual net disposable income per person in a rural household to the city one is forecasted. In addition, further infrastructure development in the rural areas will serve the purposes of developing the economic base and creating non-agricultural jobs.

The indicated actions should be implemented in regards to biodiversity by increasing it or at the very least not deteriorating its condition.

Mr Chairman,

Food safety is an important element of national health policy and public health protection, especially in the context of the *COVID-19 pandemic*. The State Sanitary Inspection reporting to the Minister of Health is responsible for the implementation of tasks in the field of public health, including the supervision of health conditions of food and nutrition. Supervision over the State Sanitary Inspection in all areas of public health is based on objective laboratory tests carried out in accredited laboratories of sanitary and epidemiological stations. Sanitary supervision is exercised, inter alia, through planned and intervention controls, implementation of the sampling plan, rapid exchange of information under the RASFF system (rapid alert system for food and feed), AAC (administrative assistance and cooperation) and as part of cooperation among other authorized bodies official control. This supervision is comprehensive and forms part of broadly understood epidemiological surveillance.

The role of the state in ensuring the health safety of consumers is undeniably important, and EU law imposes on the governments of member states the obligation to undertake a number of projects and various adjustments in this respect. The achievement of current legislation is to focus requirements on problems related to consumer protection in terms of ensuring food safety (health protection) and their reliable information (protection of interests).

Food monitoring plays an important role in ensuring product safety. **The Early Warning System for Dangerous Food (RASFF)** launched in the country ensures exchange of information between official control bodies in Europe that are members of this system. Information on food, feed and food contact materials that are potentially hazardous to human, animal or environmental health and follow up as a result of identifying such products is entered into the system. In Poland, the network is managed by the Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Such supervision of food safety and epidemiological safety is an element of public health supervision that has been working for many years

Distinguished Delegates,

Poland is among the countries with the lowest malnutrition rates. However, there are increasing problems with poor nutrition. Obesity, one of the major health problems worldwide, also affects the growing number of children and young people in Poland. Adult obesity (25.6%) and anaemia rates for women of childbearing age (25.7%) are higher than the European average and have increased since 2005. Since then, overweight (25.7%) and obesity (9.1%) rates have also increased for children and young people aged 5-19. According to a nationwide survey carried out by **the National Food and Nutrition Institute**, more than 20% of children and young people, i.e. every fifth student, suffer from overweight or obesity. It is estimated that every year in Poland there will be 400 thousand more

overweight and obese children, including 80 thousand with obesity. The generation of today's teenagers will live shorter than the generation of their parents due to complications related to overweight.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle among adults as well as children and adolescents is considered to be one of the most crucial priorities, which will result in a reduction in the percentage of overweight and obese people. The education of children and youth with regard to physical fitness (including obesity), nutrition and nutritional safety is integrated with the sustainable development of the country in the light of the 2030 Agenda.

Health education has been included in the priorities of education as well as compulsory sets of educational goals and content of teaching determined in core curriculum for all types of schools - primary and secondary. It is a didactic and educational process in which students learn how to live in order to maintain and improve their own health and create a health-beneficial environment, and, in the case of an illness or disability, as well as student's activity in the actions taken by the school actively participate in its treatment, cope and reduce its negative effects.

The importance and significance of compulsory physical education classes is emphasised in Art. 28 of the Education Law Act. The Ministry of Education (MEN) supports activities associated with promoting physical activity of children, every year engaging in the celebrations of the European Week of Sport, which in Poland is coordinated by the Ministry of Sports. MEN sends information concerning this important initiative to Regional Boards of Education to enable them to influence the undertaking of active lifestyle by students throughout the entire year by means of encouraging schools to participate in the initiative.

Proper nutrition is another factor, apart from physical education, which has a significant impact on the health of children and youth. With regard to the latter, provisions of the law govern the issues associated with the foods offered by school shops and canteens in order to reduce high-energy foods in the diet of children and youth as effectively as possible and thus shape proper eating habits.

Ministry of National Education introduced to **the 2019-2023 Multiannual Government Program Meals at School and at Home** (module 3) on the equipment for school canteens (cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy). It was planned that the implementation of the Program will activate local governments to prepare healthy meals at schools and improve the conditions for students to eat breakfast and lunch. The provisions also make it possible to take into account the situation of children who have certain recommendations regarding e.g. diet, pursuant to Art. 155 of the in order to provide children with appropriate care, nutrition and education and care-related methods during the stay in a public kindergarten and school. The child's parent shall provide the headmaster with data considered relevant by them with regard to the child's health, diet and psychophysical development.

From the 2017/2018 school year, each school has a combined educational and preventive program, which includes content and activities addressed to students, teachers and parents. Since 1 September 2019, schools have been obliged to make an annual diagnosis on the basis of which they set up the program. The diagnosis concerns the developmental needs of students in the school environment.

MEN cooperates with the National Centre for Agricultural Development - the coordinator of the implementation of the **Program for Schools** in Poland, established by the European Commission under the Common Agricultural Policy. In the aim to change the eating habits in children by increasing the proportion of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in their daily diet and promoting a healthy diet. Educational materials supporting the implementation of educational activities by primary schools. A package of educational materials has been prepared, including handbooks for teachers and parents, a brochure for children and 4 educational films for schools.

On the basis of the Cooperation Agreement between the Minister of National Education, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Sport and Tourism on the promotion of health and prevention

of problems in children and adolescents of 23 November 2009, activities in the field of health promotion and prevention of problems in children and adolescents are implemented. By the end of 2022, solutions in the field of health education at schools will be developed. The development of an Educational Health Programme for Schools may constitute an example of such a solution.

Mr Chairman,

The modern world faces numerous challenges that one of the most important is to ensure food security for the rapidly growing world population, especially in the context of the *COVID-19 pandemic*. **The many threats to food security include food loss and waste.**

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that around 1/3 of the food produced is wasted annually in the world, and about 1.3 billion tonnes of edible food in terms of weight. Food losses and waste have reached such a high level that they should be treated as a global problem, manifesting in the entire agri-food chain, from primary production through harvesting, storage, processing, distribution to consumption, or "**Farm to Fork**". Food is lost or wasted in all countries of the world, both in those with chronic malnutrition as well as those with excessive food consumption.

Food waste is not only a missed opportunity to reduce the number of malnourished people in developing countries, but also a huge waste of resources such as soil, water and energy needed to produce food. Therefore, it is unacceptable to deplete natural resources and degrade important ecosystems to produce food that is ultimately not consumed, while over 780 million people in the world suffer from chronic malnutrition. We need to adjust our thinking about the way we value and use natural resources and make preventing food waste a priority. Food losses and food waste entail enormous economic and environmental costs.

The FAO has assessed the global cost of food waste of \$ 1 trillion a year (the value of waste products and subsidies paid to produce them), environmental costs such as greenhouse gas emissions, water scarcity and erosion reach around \$ 700 billion.

The problem of food waste is now becoming a global problem. The idea of sustainable production and sustainable consumption has become an important element in stopping food waste. The key assumption of sustainable production is the best use of natural resources so as to ensure sustainable civilization development while maintaining the natural environment. This was highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets a global target for food loss and reducing food waste. (One of the aims of the goal 12 is to create sustainable consumption and production patterns, by 2030, halve the global quantity of food wasted per person in retail sales and consumption and to reduce food losses in the production and distribution process, including those arising during harvest).

The Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe emphasises that joint efforts by farmers, the food industry, retailers and consumers, supported by resource-efficient production techniques, sustainable food choices (in line with WHO recommendations) and reduced food waste, can contribute to food security at global level as well as to more resource efficiency.

In order to prevent food loss and waste effectively, action at all levels (global, EU, national, regional and local) and the involvement of all participants in the agri-food chain responsible for food loss and waste, i.e. producers, processors, suppliers, traders, sellers, restaurateurs and consumers is necessary. The above issues are reflected in **the European Green Deal (EGD)** document developed by the European Commission and the directions of the Farm to Fork strategy concept. The aim of the Farm to Fork concept is to create a fair, healthy and environmental friendly food system. As a part of this strategy, sustainable food activities will be implemented covering the entire value chain, simultaneously contributing to closing the loop in this sector of the economy (GOZ) and reducing the negative impact of the food processing and retail sector on the environment inter alia, through measures to combat food waste.

Furthermore, educational activities as well as governmental and non-governmental initiatives are an important starting points to diminish food waste. These activities will bring economic, social, health and environmental benefits, not only to the current inhabitants of the world, but also future generations.

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According to the estimates 9 million tons of food is wasted annually in Poland, i.e. an average of 235 kg of food per capita. On September 18th 2019 the food waste prevention regulations came into force in Poland, according to which large shops and wholesalers must sign an agreement with a selected non-governmental organisation and provide it with food free of charge. Additionally, since October 2013 there is a possibility to deduct VAT by all Public Benefit Organization donors. This applies to food producers, but also to distributors, wholesalers, restaurateurs and caterers.

In Poland, non-governmental organisations play the crucial part in reducing the food waste. **Food Banks** have been conducting social activities in Poland for over 25 years in order to reduce the scale of food waste and aid those in need. Food Banks are a proven social model operating both in Poland as well as in many other countries around the world. They operate in an effective, cost-optimal manner and with great benefits for society.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Improving the quality of life is possible due to the sustainable use of natural resources. Poland ensures the implementation of SDGs at the national level by including them in the most important strategic documents shaping the social and economic development of the country. One of them is the **National Ecological Policy** with an outlook to 2030. This policy develops the environmental area of SRD and will implement 11 out of 17 SDGs.

Polish performance in the implementation of **Goal 2. Eliminate hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture** reached 2nd degree on the international 3-degree scale of list of indicators of their values.

This approach will ensure both the continuation of current activities in the field of the environment and the appropriate rank of the implementation process in the 2030 horizon.

Thank you for your attention