

**STATEMENT OF H.E. MR GEORGI PANAYOTOV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE 52<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria align itself with the statement made on behalf of European Union and its member states.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Program of Action. A quarter of a century ago the world leaders put forward a bold vision regarding human rights, population, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and sustainable development. This vision was transformed into a remarkable and ground breaking consensus that recognized the link between individual dignity and human rights, including the right to plan one's family, and placed them at the very heart of development. Such interlinkages laid the ground for the elaboration of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Bulgaria welcomes the consensual adoption of the Political Declaration on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ICPD, which reaffirms the member states commitment to implement the ICPD and its Program of Action. While celebrating the progress that has been achieved through the years we need to reflect on how much still needs to be done so that we can all live in a world where the human rights of everybody are respected, where all individuals have full control over and decides freely and responsibly on the matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence, where mothers give birth in a safe and nurturing environment.

Bulgaria remains committed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Program of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and also remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Since this year is a review year, I would like to emphasize the importance of the regional processes. The outcomes of those give additional guidance on how to accelerate the implementation of the Program of Action. My country greatly appreciates the opportunity to co-lead the review process for the European region, thus contributing to the common efforts of implementing the ICPD commitments, as well as bringing consensus around issues of vital importance to achieve sustainable development. The discussions were enriching and informative and

allowed for sharing experience and analyzing trends, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the ICPD Agenda.

This year's focus of the discussions in the Commission on Population and Development is on the further implementation of the Program of Action and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so I would like to say a few words about the efforts my country has been making in this regard.

Hailing from Eastern Europe, a region marked by low fertility, population ageing, complex migration movements, Bulgaria recognizes the need to invest in the human capital and create an enabling environment for young people, women, children and most marginalized, leaving no one behind, thus bringing stability and prosperity.

Nationally, we have good practices in place and we are achieving results in areas such as youth policies, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including the right to plan one's family, equal access of men and women to decent job, women's and girls' empowerment, right to education. We are developing and applying a national demographic strategy with the aim to counter the negative demographic trends. My country also has good practices in policies related to the elderly and to the people with disabilities.

Through the years, Bulgaria developed a great cooperation with UNFPA, working on joint projects in the above mentioned areas with countries from our region. A significant share of our development assistance is designated to the realization of such initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Bulgaria's determination to work together with all relevant stakeholders and partners to implement fully the Cairo commitments so that our children live in a better and more just world.