



REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AT GENEVA

Statement of His Excellency

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*High-level Segment of the United Nations
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**Madame President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

While supporting the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union, I would like to offer some additional comments.

Let me begin by confirming that Poland is of the view that public health determines in a direct way the social development of every country, region and continent, and that without having an effective health care system, it is not possible to achieve success in the social, political, economic and cultural development of a country.

The government of the Republic of Poland undertakes intensive actions to provide health care, with a strong emphasize on the most vulnerable groups. Our activities include implementation of national health care programmes as well as positioning public health as one of priorities of growing Polish official development assistance. Paying a special attention to women, children and people suffering from communicable diseases we declare our will to contribute to full and timely achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to public health.

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me present briefly general conditions of mothers and children in Poland. Polish government makes efforts to ensure that pregnant women and children receive the highest possible standard of health care service. The Polish law has fully implemented the provisions of international law, agreements and conferences final documents, including those dedicated to reproductive health issues. Pregnant women and children receive special medical care. Pursuant to the law, all minors, pregnant women and women in pre- and postnatal period are entitled to a free health care.

The main objective of the maternal and child health care is to reduce infant mortality rate. A positive, constantly decreasing trend in infant mortality is confirmed by the indicator that represents the number of deaths among infants per 1000 live births, which in 2008 decreased (by 0.4 point) to the level of 5.6‰ (by contrast, in 1990 it was 19.3‰). The perinatal mortality rate is a widely accepted indicator of the standard of health care during pregnancy, at childbirth and during the early postnatal period. Since 1989, Poland has experienced a constant decreasing trend in infant mortality, accompanied by an improvement in pre- and

postnatal as well as infant mortality indicators, as a result of the introduction of the three-step perinatal health care.

Distinguished Delegates,

As far as the HIV/AIDS pandemic is concerned, I would like to mention a series of actions aimed at treatment and prevention of the disease.

Until the end of 2008, 12 000 cases of HIV infections and 2 000 cases of AIDS were registered in Poland. There are approximately 800 cases of HIV infection detected each year in Poland.

In Poland, a uniform and integrated ARV therapy has been implemented for 8 years, in accordance with international recommendations and commitments, including the Millennium Declaration and the "Three Ones" rule. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Poland, the National AIDS Centre carries out wide-scale educational and information activities, aiming at the prevention of new cases of HIV infection. In order to reach the largest number of doctors with information about HIV/AIDS, an e-learning programme has been launched, which is available through the Internet website. There is a national telephone helpline that has been operating for 12 years. Free, anonymous HIV tests are offered in more than 25 testing points.

The HIV/AIDS epidemiological situation in Poland is relatively stable. However, considering the fast-growing number of HIV infections in Central and Eastern Europe, there is a potential risk of epidemic outbreaks in the region, which may have a direct impact on the situation in Poland.

Distinguished Delegates,

Poland would like to highlight its commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to public health including as agreed in Goal 5, the achievement of universal access to reproductive health in accordance with the provisions of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo that took place in 1994.

However, Poland would like to emphasize that as it was provided in ICPD Programme of Action, according to Polish law, abortion should not be considered as a method of family planning. Poland would also like to stress that in our understanding any reference made to the sexual and reproductive health and rights does not constitute an encouragement to the promotion of abortion on request.

Distinguished Delegates,

Poland has always stressed the need to address global development disparities, emphasizing the importance of the fight against poverty, of the improvement of global public health, universal access to education, gender equality and promotion of democratic principles.

In the light of the experience gained by Poland in the transformation process, our main priority is to provide development assistance to countries currently deep in the process of political, economic and social transformation. Owing to successful reforms introduced in Poland after 1989, the Polish government is deeply convinced that democratic institutions, efficient state administration and economy are among the most important factors in creating prosperity and providing a stable health care system.

Polish development assistance is mainly of a bilateral character. The value of the Polish official development assistance has been systematically increasing. Since 2004, the official development assistance has nearly doubled and now amounts to around 300 million USD, which is approximately 0.13% GDP.

Poland is committed to continue its support to the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of assistance projects in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and embassies, as well as through payments to multilateral international organisations. We provide financial contribution to UNICEF, to the Campaign to Fight Obstetric Fistula of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and to APOC — African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control. Having mentioned Poland's financial contributions to and active participation in UNAIDS, I would like to add that this year Poland was elected to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

Distinguished Delegates,

With the view to achieve the Millennium Development Goals fully and promptly, Poland has decided to sign the Millennium Development Goals Declaration.

In the context of our development assistance, I would like to take this opportunity to present several projects financed by the Government of the Republic of Poland and implemented by non-governmental organisations and Polish embassies, as well as by church missions. Among several dozen projects implemented in 2008, I would like to mention the project on providing medical equipment to medical facilities in Parwan, Panjshir and Kapisa provinces of Afghanistan, the project "Children without borders" (Dzieci bez granic) aiming at providing basic palliative care for children in Armenia, the project on supplying drinking water to the

Camp Luka hospital in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), the project on maintaining a school for children from leper families and a leprosarium at the leprosy referral centre in Puri (India), the project on medical rehabilitation in rural areas of Malawi, the construction of a centre for the blind in Kibeho (Rwanda) and the provision of specialist care and vocational training to women with obstetric fistula in Southern Sudan.

Distinguished Delegates,

Due to increasing interdependence between countries and continents, problems related to public health care to an ever large extent become problems of the whole international community. The latest example is the current A/H1N1 flu pandemic.

On the other hand, the world is currently undergoing a financial crisis that may jeopardize the already achieved results of the development activities.

I would like to stress that the joint effort of the international community for the improvement of public health offers the biggest chance of collective success.

Madame President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Poland would like to reconfirm its commitment to the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health, including the 4th, 5th and 6th Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you, Madame President