

BELARUS

Please compare with oral text

**Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
on actions for the follow-up to the
Programme of Action of the
International Conference on Population and
Development Beyond 2014**

22 September 2014

**Speech of
Valentin Rybakov
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Belarus**

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development adopted a document that ushered in a new era – the Programme of Action, the aim of which was to achieve progressive development of human potential.

What made the Programme of Action unique was the fact that for the first time, the UN threw its weight behind the need to develop human wellbeing by investing in healthcare, education and the promotion of equality.

The secret of the success of the Cairo agreements is the fact that they are based on careful consideration of the national priorities of states and a respectful attitude towards national characteristics and traditions.

Twenty years have passed since then, and the Cairo agreements are just as relevant as they were then. Unfortunately, despite the efforts made and the progress achieved, the international community has still not resolved a large number of the problems mentioned in the Programme of Action. Early marriages are still happening, and abortion is being used as a method of contraception. Profound socio-economic inequality, child orphanhood and irresponsible parenthood are still obstacles to the wellbeing of society.

The world has also encountered new challenges that may hinder the future development of civilization.

The now-fashionable trend of promoting so-called sexual rights as universal human rights, propaganda about gender identity and same-sex marriages, and the fact that same-sex couples are being allowed to adopt children are undermining the very idea of demographics and development, and are contrary to human nature.

All too often, what underpins these approaches is not concern for the real needs of such people, but a dangerous ideology that can destroy the foundation of society – the family – for the sake of their own interests.

This tactic is also being used to stir up disputes and enforce certain behavioural models that are by no means supported everywhere in the world.

An indicator of the wellbeing of any society is the situation of each individual family and the effectiveness of family-oriented policy.

Unfortunately, it is the family which is now most subject to the influence of negative factors in relation to demographics and development which are eroding the institution of the family and undermining and substituting traditional family values.

As the natural and fundamental nucleus of society, as is stated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the family is the mainstay of a strong and successful state.

It is through the family that national priorities in relation to demographics and development are achieved.

The traditional family is a necessary condition for the sound upbringing and development of future generations.

Strengthening the institution of the family is an essential policy priority in Belarus. Material and social support for families, especially families with many children, the encouragement of responsible parenthood and the strengthening of ties between the generations are the unshakeable foundations of family policy in Belarus.

States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations recognize the importance of the aims and objectives of the ICPD for the post-2015 development agenda and we all agree that these aims and objectives must be fully reflected in sustainable development goals.

Belarus is certain that the future development agenda cannot possibly be developed without a measured and balanced approach to access for populations to high-quality healthcare

and education, the provision of employment and the complete satisfaction of basic requirements for food, water and housing.

For the Cairo agreements to be implemented effectively beyond 2014, all partners must focus their efforts on preserving and supporting traditional family values and not allow the institution of the family to be eroded. The traditional family must not be regarded as something that is outdated or in need of modernization.

Belarus welcomes the efforts of partner states and non-governmental organizations to include the interests and priorities of the traditional family in the post-2015 development agenda.

We will make our contribution together with all those who are interested in building a stable world with the traditional family at its core.