



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
B U L G A R I A
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STATEMENT
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Special Session of the General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of the
Implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on
Population and Development

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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all I would like to extend my **warmest** congratulations to you on your election as President of the Special Session of the General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, I would also like to extend my congratulations to ~~the~~ other members of the Bureau.

My delegation highly appreciates the "Proposals for Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development." We do **firmly** believe that this document shall decisively contribute to the **full** implementation of agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994.

Mr. President,

As Bulgaria has already aligned itself with the statement delivered by Germany on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries, I would like to raise some issues of particular importance to my country.

The development of the population in Bulgaria today is characterized by the deterioration of the health demographic indicators - steady decrease in birth-rate (7.9 per 1000); increase in total mortality rate (14.3 per 1000); negative population growth (minus 6.4 per 1000); an exceptionally low total fertility rate (1.11 children) Infant mortality rate has been fluctuating at about the level of 14 to 16 per 1000 in the last few years. The demographic aging of the population process continues to deepen. In 1998 each fourth person in the country was at retirement age. This imposes development of a policy oriented to meeting the needs of an aging nation. The fact that the young generations who shall replace people in active age in time are decreasing in their number is also of great concern.

The demographic situation in the country at the present moment reflects the historical dynamics of the population comprising decades. Pro-natal policy was conducted by 1990 but it proved to be ineffective and did not lead to any change in the reproductive behavior of the population. Regardless of the availability of a well-developed health network in the country, the offered **family** planning-related health services were not effective. This turned induced abortion into a fundamental birth-rate regulating method.

Mr. President,

A radical health care reform has been under implementation in the Republic of Bulgaria since 1997. Primary health care occupies an essential place in relation to health services offered to the population. In conformity with the Program of Action from Cairo, the primary health care system shall offer the complete bundle of services in relation to reproductive health. The health promotion activities and sexually transmitted diseases prevention as well as unwanted pregnancy have an appropriate place and role in the General Practitioner's package of services.

International cooperation and partnerships have been of exceptional importance in the last few years in relation to the implementation of the health and social reform in the country. The foundations for improving the quality of care of family planning services were laid down within the framework of "Family Planning" Project financed under the PHARE Program. The Project was implemented within the time period from 1995 to 1997 and an opportunity was provided for the effective cooperation with the non-governmental sector and the mass media.

The implementation of a one-year project on **HIV/AIDS** strategic planning was launched within the framework of the agreement between the Ministry of Health and United Nations Population Fund. The aim of the project is to carry out an analysis of the situation and to develop a National Action Plan.

Mr. President,

The participation in the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly is of particular importance to Bulgaria since in the last few years the demographic trends of the country have been with an assertive stagnation character indicating negative consequences in relation to the next few decades.

At present the development of a comprehensive reproductive Health Strategy in cooperation with UNFPA is of priority to the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria as well as the further development and implementation of a National Reproductive Health Policy and Program worked out on the basis of the recommendations of the European Conference on Population Problems and Program of Action **from** Cairo.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to **.underline** once more the commitment of the Bulgarian Government to the development of the nation within the context of the global development in the name of the values common to all humanity.

Thank you.