



REPUBLIC OF POLAND
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

750 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017

TEL. (212) 744-2506

Check against delivery

STATEMENT BY

Ms. HENRYKA MOŚCICKA-DENDYS

UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF POLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

29TH SPECIAL SESSION

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
BEYOND 2014**

NEW YORK, 22ND SEPTEMBER 2014

*Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me express my Government's appreciation for convening this Special Session of the General Assembly, which aims at underscoring both the progress achieved since 1994 and significance of the necessary follow-up of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014. It goes without saying that adoption of the Programme of Action was a milestone in providing women with necessary protection and ensuring that gender equality is a global priority.

Poland's appreciation for the ICPD Programme of Action derives not only from the fact that it gives due significance to activities aimed at combating different forms of discrimination. Our focused attention on the ICPD and its future priorities is also due to the fact, that the principle of equal treatment is a horizontal one, and therefore affects practically all social spheres of our everyday life.

We fully share the view expressed in the report of the UN Secretary General that achievements over the last 20 years have been remarkable. They range from significant gains in women's equality, through world's population health and life expectancy, to *inter alia* educational attainment and human rights protection systems. However, we fully realize that despite the accomplishments made, we are not at the end of the road yet. The path to sustainability will require better management and greater innovation to protect all persons from discrimination and violence, thus allowing to contribute to and benefit from development in its economic, social and environmental aspects of life.

Mr. President,

The ICPD and its Programme of Action constitute an important social platform upon which my Government has formulated and implemented many of its socio-economic priorities. In Poland, the equal status of women and men is guaranteed by the Constitution. We believe that promoting equality and empowering women should be the core of each national policy on combating violence. Poland has found it imperative to combat violence. In 2010 we amended the law on combating family violence, which prohibits corporal punishment and another one, which obliges the perpetrator to move out from the house. In 2013 government adopted National Action Plan on Equal Treatment 2013-2016, of which counteracting gender based violence is an essential part.

In recent years we have also been working intensely on empowering and supporting independence of women. We have changed provisions of the Labor Code, Family Code and electoral law. Since 2010 we have had quotas on voting lists and in some political parties the number of women mandates has doubled. In the last five years Poland has seen a strong development of the independent women's movement. One of the most significant initiatives in this regard is the Congress of Women gathering annually the Polish most dynamic and successful women leaders from political, social and economic circles.

Mr. President,

Secretary General points out in his report, that today national demographic trajectories are more diverse than in 1994. Poland finds herself faced with many challenges in this regard. According to the forecasts of the Central Statistical Office, in 2030 the size of the Polish population will decrease by 1.3 million persons. Therefore, further negative changes in the age structure of the population and shortages on the labour market are to be expected. For these reasons, in 2012 the Council of Ministers adopted a strategic document entitled "*Migration Policy of Poland – the Current State of*

Play and Further Actions”, which aims at adjusting migration policy scenarios to the labour market needs and competitiveness of the Polish economy. Simultaneously, the Government undertook some initiatives to improve the situation by increasing fertility rate of the population through reduction of costs of bringing up children, ensuring better conditions for reconciling professional and family functions.

Mr. President,

All Polish citizens, regardless of their social or economic situation, have the right to health protection and equal access to health care services financed within the public funds. The range and terms of providing health care services as well as tasks for the public authorities to ensure equal access are defined by law. A special State protection is granted to women in the period of pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. An important part of the State health policy stands for the reproductive health aspect. Central government as well as local authorities provide citizens with free access to methods and means of conscious procreation. Currently, in Poland there are modern contraceptives registered and accessible medical, medicinal products and drugs used during pregnancy and necessary for the fetus care or medical care over woman during pregnancy, and also used for the purpose of conscious procreation. The particularly important programme in the field of reproductive health is *“Programme – Infertility Treatment by In Vitro Fertilization for the period of 2013-2016”* aimed at ensuring couples with an identified male or female infertility an equal access to the in vitro fertilization, when all other methods of treatment remained fruitless. A significant achievement has also been made at the youth curriculum level. The school teaching programmes include now a subject called *“Education for family life”*. Its learning content includes, inter alia, knowledge about sexual life and family planning related subjects.

Poland contributes also to the international efforts aimed at improving and strengthening the sexual and reproductive health and rights, as defined in ICPD. Together with our international partners we fight against female genital mutilation and support actively the efforts to eliminate fistula.

Mr President,

Poland fully shares the view that owing to the ICPD and its Programme of Action much progress has been achieved. On the other hand, however, there is no single country in the world, which could not do more and better in this regard. We do believe that the UN focus should continue to support the least developed countries of the world. It is also our view that international assistance constitutes a significant, but rather secondary factor, in effectively assisting the countries in needs. The prime responsibility for sustainable development lies with national governments.

Mr. President,

As a country that has successfully transformed itself into the human rights based state and efficient economy, Poland remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights. We also wholeheartedly support the complex and effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the IV World Conference on Women and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Thank you for your attention.