

Republic of Bulgaria



Statement

**by Mr. Konstantin Andreev,
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of the Republic of Bulgaria
at the General debate for the High-level Segment
of the Economic and Social Council**

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Madam President,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular honour for me to address this High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council's Session. The themes chosen for it should make possible a comprehensive and focussed discussion on one of the keys to human development and human security. The issue of global public health concerns all Member-States and hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Following a detailed analysis of the global and national trends, the Secretary-General identified the critical challenges and laid out essential recommendations on policies for global health, strengthening systems for health and enhancing the circle of partnership.

Madam President,

The achievement of sustained health is one of the main prerequisites for a successful implementation of the MDGs. We fully subscribe to the recommendations of the Millennium Development Goals Report, 2008, in this regard. We also share the view that the progress attained in preserving public health must be steady, and believe that this needs more vigorous measures to be taken by the whole international community. It would not be possible to reach the Millennium Declaration goals without coordination and cooperation among all countries and international organizations. Yet the growing number of international initiatives related to public health reveal also problems, such as a risk of fragmentation of efforts, insufficient coordination of actions, as well as a lack of new adequate channels for financing health-care and applying new technologies, which would ensure better opportunities to reduce the impact of the inter-linked global challenges over the past two years: the food security crisis, climate change, regional conflicts, and the economic crisis. Finding

solutions to each of these crises would not be possible without integrated cross-sector actions both at national and international level.

In this context, Bulgaria endeavours to make its contribution with a clear conviction that the social and economic environment at national and global level is a crucial element that should be factored in health policies. Consequently, we strive to encourage the sharing of information and best practices in this sphere in order to advance better results-based actions, aimed at health protection. We are aware that the current environment, seriously affected by the financial and economic crises, poses a real threat to internationally agreed goals and commitments related to health. There is a real risk that the latter might be addressed as a lower-level priority target, with all possible negative implications, especially with regard to the most vulnerable.

Yet from our perspective, the crisis may also be an opportunity, a serious chance to pursue policies of reforming, modernizing and strengthening all relevant sectors. Already since the end of 2007, the Government of Bulgaria launched urgent measures aimed at the maximal mitigation, and counteraction to the consequences of the crisis, so that recovery would be achieved as early as possible. With the Agenda 2009, adopted in March this year, the Government designed a wide range of measures with a view to guaranteeing the economic and social security of Bulgarian citizens at this time of crisis. The Agenda includes three major sets of measures and policies: preserving a sound fiscal system, reinforcing the Bulgarian economy and securing the social protection for the citizens.

Let me outline some of the activities undertaken in order to guarantee the social protection of the people, which combine measures facilitating access to employment, sustained reforms in the areas of education and science with special attention paid to the needs of vulnerable groups, to persons in a disadvantaged situation, with the allocation of very substantial funds to public health. Agenda 2009 provides for enhancement of the support and increase in

the spending for social security, social aid and care. It is also designed to generate an increase in the minimal and maximal unemployment compensation, to strengthen support and provision of social services and health care for families with children and senior citizens in order to allow them to gain incomes that could guarantee them a decent standard of living.

Of particular importance is the focus on the needs of people with disabilities. The Agenda provides targeted support, a supply of appropriate health packages, as well as various stimuli for entrepreneurs, who employ persons with disabilities. The measures aimed at supporting people with low incomes include targeted social protection, such as supplies for heating, etc.

Bulgaria will allocate substantial amounts of funds to public health, part of which with specific focus on improving the quality of health services citizens receive. These expenditures will be disbursed for repairs, reconstruction, modernization and rehabilitation of university and specialized hospitals, centres for urgent medical care, multi-profile district hospitals, etc. They will provide contemporary diagnostic and therapeutic facilities; particular focus will be put on health services for oncologic treatment. This will ensure health services of higher quality, as well as early diagnosis of illnesses.

In conclusion, Madam President, I wish to reaffirm my country's support for the findings of the Secretary-General's Reports, and our full commitment to the recommendations, contained therein. We share a common goal - to alleviate the negative impact of the global economic crisis, to secure health protection, and preserve the health of all people from the possible unfavorable implications. We align ourselves with the Draft of the Ministerial Declaration, and express our determination to reinforce the domestic institutional capacity and to pursue a cross-sector approach in achieving the internationally agreed goals and commitments related to public health.

Thank you, Madam President.