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National Statement

Regional Conference on ICPD30

"Population and Development: Ensuring Rights and Choices"

19-20, October, 2023

**Distinguished Chairperson,
Excellences,
Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,**

We are at the midpoint of Agenda 2030 and on the eve of celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the ICPD – two transformative agendas, which put the fulfilling of the human rights of all, including those of women and girls and their individual dignity and choices at the very heart of development.

The response and responsibility of all stakeholders is of paramount importance to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD POA and the Agenda 2030, for transforming our World and Leaving No One Behind!

While this is a great occasion to celebrate the remarkable progress achieved during the last 30 years in terms of the ICPD agenda, we need to recognize that there are gaps in its implementation, which need to be filled and we have to act now and faster if we are to live in a world where the human rights of everybody are respected, where all individuals have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on the matters related to sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

There would be no better time than today to reaffirm our political support for the ICPD and act on its implementation, knowing also that we cannot achieve the SDGs without delivering on the ICPD Agenda.

In this regard, my country places particular importance on the ICPD regional and global reviews. They offer a great opportunity to assess the progress made so far and to provide tailor-made solutions according to the specific needs and realities of the regions and globally. We gave our strong support by co-chairing the Regional Review on ICPD 25 for the UNECE region.

The review is taking place right after the SDG Summit and commitments made by our leaders. It helps to further strengthen the link between Agenda 2030 and ICPD implementation but will also allow us to exchange views on how ICPD could contribute to the upcoming Summit of the Future in 2024. Confirming our full commitment to ICPD POA

and UNFPA efforts, Bulgaria attended the 78th High Level Segment on ICPD30 as co-organizer.

As part of the region of Eastern Europe, a region marked by low fertility, population ageing, and complex migration movements, my country recognizes the need to invest in the human capital and create an enabling environment for young people, women, children and the most marginalized, leaving no one behind, thus bringing stability and prosperity in our life.

Bulgaria consistently supports the UN agencies, funds and programs in efforts to accelerate the 2030 Agenda and actively works as a member of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UN-Women to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard Bulgaria gave significant impetus to the acceleration of the ICPD agenda, chairing the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS (in 2021).

Bulgaria believes that investments in sexual and reproductive health, and in the three zeros at the heart of the UNFPA strategic plan, deliver strong returns to individuals, communities, and economies with multiplier effects across all the SDGs. If we do not make these investments, we could save billions today, only to give more tomorrow to compensate for the losses. The true losses though cannot be offset because they will be measured in human lives, dignity, and rights, not in money.

Answering the challenges in building resilience and leaving no one behind, Bulgaria and UNFPA organized Ministerial Conference on Demographic resilience, held in Sofia, in December 2021. At the first ever conference on Demographic resilience two significant initiatives were announced - a **Decade for Demographic resilience** (2022-2032) and **Sofia Alliance** as a Platform for sharing best practices, ideas, policies. My sincere appreciation to H.E. Amina Mohamed, the Deputy UNSG, to Dr. Natalia Kanem, the UNFPA Executive Director, to Mrs. Dubravka Shuiza, EC Vice-president on Democracy and Demography, and to all participants for attending and supporting this prominent event.

In its capacity **as Chair of ECOSOC for the period 2022 - 2023,** Bulgaria actively worked to strengthen the sustainable development system by providing solid, innovative, science-based and action-oriented guidelines.

On national level, we made significant steps for No One to be Left Behind. **We have good practices** in place, achieving results in areas such as youth policies, sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights, including the right to plan one's family, equal access of men and women to decent job, women's, and girls' empowerment, right to education. We are developing and applying a national demographic strategy with the aim of countering the negative demographic trends. My country also has good practices in policies related to the elderly, vulnerable and to people with disabilities.

Dear Dr. Kanem,

Through the years, Bulgaria developed a great cooperation with UNFPA, attending the Cairo conference, the Nairobi summit, commemorating the UNPA mission, working on common projects related to our priorities. A significant share of the Bulgarian development assistance is designated to the realization of such projects.

Bulgaria greatly values the commendable work of the UNFPA, which in many cases and for many people is the only source of hope. Bulgaria remains committed to deepening its cooperation with UNFPA as well as to making every effort to contribute to the achievement of the ICPD agenda and the SDGs.

Bulgaria reiterates its determination to work together with the other countries and partners to fully implement the Cairo commitments, to **develop Decade for Demographic Resilience** and **Sofia Alliance**, so that our children live in a better and more just world.

We share the view, that universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral system, is a key approach for international cooperation in addressing the challenges facing humanity.

I thank you!