

**Speech of the Minister of Health of Ukraine
at the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
(22.09.2014)**

We would like to take this opportunity to support the ideas expressed by the UN Secretary-General in the report “Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014” (number A/69/62). We also welcome the outcome documents of the 47th Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development, which took place in New York in April of this year and in which Ukraine also participated.

Ukraine has made its contribution to the analysis of the outcomes of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and this analysis demonstrates that over the past 20 years, we have successfully achieved significant positive outcomes. Thanks to the implementation of national family planning and reproductive health programmes, there has been a significant reduction in maternal and child mortality and a considerable decrease in the indicator for the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. We have also achieved reductions in the indicators for the rates at which HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are spreading. Young people have begun to take much better care of their health and they are leading a more responsible lifestyle. A law on the prevention of domestic violence has been adopted, as has a government programme to establish equality of rights and opportunities for women and men.

Fundamental demographic research is being carried out in Ukraine to help with the development of government policy. Social welfare and the protection of elderly people's rights are being reformed on the basis of the United Nations Principles and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. We are very grateful to our partners from the United Nations Population Fund for their steadfast and systemic support for the Ukrainian government's efforts to achieve the targets set by the International Conference on Population and Development. We recognize your solidarity, which is being expressed in concrete progressive projects in Ukraine, and we express special thanks for the humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons within Ukraine who were forced to leave their homes because of the threats to their safety and lives posed by Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine and its support for terrorists and separatists.

We recognize that in addition to the achievements of the past 20 years, there are also many unsolved problems. We must go on working together to improve quality of life for people and their safety.

We share the position with regard to the relevance of the findings of the Report, which illustrate the current problems in relation to poverty reduction, equal access to social services, high-quality healthcare and education, and the current obstacles to the enjoyment of rights and satisfaction of the interests of many people. The issue of reducing inequality between people living in towns and those living in rural areas is still relevant. This means that the aims and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development are still relevant.

Ukraine considers that the stable development of nations can only be achieved by investing in the individual development of each person and the protection of their rights and dignity throughout their lifetimes.

We are convinced that future development policy must focus on increasing prosperity and incomes and maintaining a good standard of health by paying particular attention to reproductive health through prevention and high-quality medical services. An equally important part of future development is high-quality and accessible lifelong learning, real rather than notional gender equality, and the search for an effective and comprehensive response to the challenges posed by the ageing of the planet's population. As one of the world's "old" countries in terms of the age structure of its population, Ukraine regards population ageing as the most important demographic process of modern times, and one which will to a large extent shape the face of humanity during this century. We would like to highlight the importance of the future support of all countries for the work of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in the field of population ageing. Ukraine attaches great importance to its cooperation with the Fund and thanks it for the systematic support it has given to the Government in order to develop and implement government policy in response to social and economic challenges associated with ageing. Our main joint project is the development (and subsequent implementation) of a comprehensive national programme on population ageing based on the Madrid Plan.

To achieve our goals, we need significant resources, and so we call on the governments of donor countries to boost their support for the work of UNFPA in the field of population ageing, both at global level and in Ukraine.

Without doubt, the development of government policy or programmes must be based on thorough analysis of the dynamics of demographic processes and consideration of the corresponding trends. At the same time, I would like to underline that it is only possible to lead a full and healthy life and have equal opportunities in conditions of peace. Unfortunately, in the modern world we are witnesses to numerous armed conflicts and instances of aggression. We ourselves, as a peaceful developing state, have also become hostages to the inferiority complex of politicians in our aggressive neighbour from Moscow. The Russian Federation's direct armed interference and support for terrorists are now making it very difficult for Ukraine to fulfil development guarantees and to protect the lives and health of its citizens in the occupied territories. Putin's aggression and attempts to seize foreign land must be condemned by all international institutions that respect the law and value human life and dignity. I wish to thank all countries that are supporting Ukraine in word and in deed at a difficult time for us and are providing us with humanitarian aid.

We agree that systematic and targeted work on the part of all interested parties is necessary to solve development problems. Cooperation with the UN is an effective mechanism for developing such a partnership and complying with global strategies. Consequently, we would like to confirm that we support and are making every effort to assist with the future implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014, as was previously stated at regional level at the Summit of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva in July 2013.

Ukraine proposes that the conclusions and recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, as well as the results of regional reviews of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and socio-economic issues related to population ageing, be included on the global agenda for development beyond 2015.

It is an honour for Ukraine to be a part of the international community which is actively supporting the aims and objectives of the ICPD and shares a strategic vision for human development through peace, harmony and mutual assistance.

On behalf of the Government, allow me to express sincere thanks to the Population Fund for its help and support for Ukraine. Planet Earth is the home that we all share. Wars, conflicts and environmental disasters long ago ceased to be a problem for just one country. We live in an era of globalization, and if something happens in one country, it affects us all. For this reason, we must all work together to ensure peace and safety for every person on Earth.

Thank you for your attention.

Glory to Ukraine!