

*Side-event*  
**Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development**  
**in Europe and Central Asia**  
**(June 5, 2018, 1.15-2.30, CR 3)**

Excellences,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen!

At the outset I would like to express gratitude to **UNFPA and the Permanent Mission of Albania** for organizing this meeting on a very topical issue.

It's my pleasure to intervene at the today's event.

I hope that my presentation **on Impact of Evidence-based Family Policies on Population Dynamics** would enrich our dialogue on one of the integral parts of the 2030 Agenda.

During my statement you can find **some additional data and infographics on the screen** for better perception and understanding the current trends in population dynamics in Belarus. *(На экране параллельно идет презентация отдельных слайдов из исследования).*

Nowadays **the most typical trends** in the current demographic developments in **Europe and Central Asia** can be named the following:

- low and decreasing fertility;
- gap between planned and actual fertility;
- population ageing;
- outmigration of working-age population.

And Belarus also is not an exception in this context.

**Birth rate in Belarus** is been reducing mainly by the decrease in number of women of reproductive age. According to population projections this tendency will be preserved until 2040. Therefore, the major goal of the Belarusian family policy is to encourage families to have two or more children.

Economic situation in the country is among factors affecting birth rate. We have reached positive dynamics in income level and this would undoubtedly contribute to stabilization of demographic situation in Belarus.

There is also a concerning tendency in Belarus characterized by the decreasing numbers of marriages and increasing numbers of divorces.

There is a number of **several tools used to tackle these problems** in Belarus, among which:

- economic and financial support of families with children;
- strengthening of family values;
- reduction mortality;
- effective migration policy.

Along with effective national policy **international cooperation** plays an inevitable role not only for deeper understanding of these demographic challenges but also for developing a scientifically-sound and evidence-based family policy.

To this end the international technical assistance project "**Support to the Implementation of the National Programme of Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus**" have been implemented in Belarus in 2015-2018. The project was funded by **the Russian Federation**. In this regard we would like to express gratitude to the Russians Federation for the opportunity to implement such project which can be considered as a good example of technical cooperation with donors.

The project was implemented by **UNFPA and UNICEF**.

**A central element of the project was to conduct a large-scale survey** "Belarus: family structure, family relationships and fertility in changing socio-economic environment", which was successfully fulfilled in Belarus in 2017. The survey was based on the internationally acknowledged Generations and Gender Programme methodology initiated and coordinated by the Population Unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

**Belarus along with Georgia and Russia became the third country in the region where such survey was conducted.**

During this survey 10 000 respondents aged between 18 and 79 were interviewed. At the same time this survey was **first ever conducted in Belarus with the use of tablets.**

The results of this survey will become a **scientific basis** for elaboration of a **new "National Programme on Demographic Security"** in 2019 with an emphasis **on low fertility, aging, migration and social policy** in general.

The implementation of the project increased **the relevance and quality of national demographic statistics** and helped to establish national indicators for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

In general **the survey conducted significantly contributes to SDGs' implementation** by Belarus.

**A sustainable system of government officials' training on issues of demography and demographic policy** was created. Together with the Russian Academy of Sciences a textbook on practical demographics for government officials has been published and a curriculum of advanced training in demographic policy has been drawn up.

The project helped Belarus **to undertake the important steps in reshaping high education on demography**. The curriculum of the Belarusian State University includes a new course "geodemography". Special educational courses for students have been developed, computer classes have been duly equipped to study this topic.

The level of professional coverage of demographic issues in **the Belarusian mass media has been raised**. A number of workshops were held for journalists in the largest Belarusian cities – Minsk, Grodno and Brest.

The project strengthened **partnerships among the state, scientific and public entities within the country**.

**Durable cooperation** between demographic scientists and sociologists, social policy specialists of **Belarus and Russia** has been established, and partnerships **have been expanded with other countries of the UNECE region** (including Sweden, Portugal, where the survey results were presented, the Netherlands, who carried out the scientific coordination of the research, as well as Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, etc., whose experts participated in international events on this topic in Minsk).

**Belarus is interested in continuing cooperation with UNFPA, Russia, UNECE and UNICEF, as well as other international partners**, to strengthen demographic potential and develop an effective family policy for implementation of national priorities in this area and achieving SDGs.

I thank you for your attention.