

Side-event

ICPD+25 in the UNECE region:

Accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs

(January 23, 2019, 8:15 – 9:30 am,

UN Secretariat Private Dining Room 4th Floor)

Excellences,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen!

At the outset I would like to **express my sincere gratitude to permanent missions of Bulgaria and Canada, as well as to UNFP** for co-organizing this briefing with Belarus on a very topical issue for all UNECE countries.

Let me also take this opportunity to **commend the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Population Fund for an excellent Regional Report on ICPD+25**. The report is a well-drafted, solid paper on population challenges typical for our region. It analyzes regional successes in overcoming them and reflects the directions in which we have to work more actively.

It's my pleasure to speak at today's event. I hope that my intervention will open the way to a fruitful and interactive dialogue on better ways and practices to address population dynamics' challenges.

Sustainable development of any state is impossible without effective, long-term and holistic approaches to population dynamics issues, including to one of the most challenging for many countries of the region, namely **population aging**. And Belarus is not an exception.

Today there are more than 14% of Belarusians who are over 65 years old and by 2030 there will be around 20% of them. We have to adapt to this phenomenon in a timely manner, so that we could take advantage of this natural process of demographic development in the near future.

Effective measures are taken in the country to fight stereotypes towards older people, as well as discrimination on the basis of age. We believe that a complete rethinking of the role of older people in society is necessary to make active aging a reality.

Therefore, **Belarus began developing a Strategy on active aging**. We expect that it will improve the quality of life of older people, and will also ensure their productive inclusion in society.

We believe that further work on ICPD implementation should be carried out exclusively in conjunction with the implementation of Agenda 2030. In this

regard we fully support the necessity to synchronize ICPD cycles with SDGs reviews.

Timely and effective implementation of SDGs requires stronger partnerships among all interested and at all levels, including governments, international organizations, civil society, business and other stakeholders.

Belarus is fully committed to Agenda 2030 and took a number of important steps for its realization not only at the national level. We are eager to accelerate implementation of SDGs at the regional and global levels as well.

An important step **towards a regional partnership** was made in Minsk on February 21-22, 2018 when **the first ever regional high-level forum for national SDG coordinators** was held.

We would like once again to thank UNECE and all other partners for their important contribution to its preparation. The **Forum gave a start to the creation of a regional network of national SDG coordinators** as a partner platform for practitioners involved in the work on SDGs implementation. We are convinced that the regional network can contribute to solving population dynamic challenges:

In Belarus, in our work on SDGs implementation we are inspired by the attention paid to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 by our President, Alexander Lukashenko. By decision of the Head of State, in 2017, a special institutional framework for managing the work on SDGs implementation was established in the country: the post of National Coordinator for SDGs was established, and the Council for Sustainable Development was set up.

As soon as this architecture was put into operation in Belarus, **a range of activities on ensuring the production and monitoring of SDG achievement indicators set off**. This work includes the integration of relevant indicators into strategic development documents of the country. Moreover, today we have 75% of the availability of data on SDGs indicators. This is a high result.

Over the past years, a sound progress has been made. However, a lot of work is ahead. Therefore, **Belarus is interested in continuing cooperation with UNFPA, other international partners** to accelerate achieving SDGs.

Let me also take this opportunity **to draw your attention to the upcoming event that will take place in Minsk tomorrow. First national forum on sustainable development** will host representatives of government agencies, parliament, non-governmental associations, businesses and academia to exchange views on the issues relevant for sustainable development and to voice proposals for further work in the field of SDGs and suggestions on how to make those proposals happen.

I thank you for your attention.