

## The delegation of Turkmenistan takes part in the 57th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development

On April 29-30, 2024, the delegation of Turkmenistan, headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Ms. Mahri Bashimova, takes part in the 57th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development.

The theme of this session is “Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

Opening the plenary session, the Chairperson of the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development, Ms. Noemi Espinosa Madrid, stressed the need to consolidate efforts to address global challenges, including the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and growing environmental crises. She noted that despite progress in reducing poverty and ensuring access to education and health care, inequalities persisted, especially for women.

It was emphasized that the main purpose of this year’s session is to reaffirm the commitments to inclusive development and gender equality made by the international community 30 years ago in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed, speaking at the opening of the session, stressed that the world’s population has increased from 5.6 billion to more than 8.1 billion since 1994. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, will continue to see population growth in the coming years, while Europe, North America and Latin America are experiencing a slowdown or decline in population growth. She said that globally, progress had been made in reducing maternal and child mortality, but health challenges remained significant and many countries faced difficulties in achieving health goals.

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According to the UN Under-Secretary-General, demographic shifts, urbanization, climate change, digital technologies and inequality are having an impact on sustainable development and measures are needed to maintain reproductive health and protect the rights of vulnerable populations.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Li Junhua, said that despite declining fertility and rising life expectancy worldwide, challenges remained, particularly in the least developed countries. According to him, it is necessary to pay special attention to aging groups of the population and ensure the continuity of social services in the field of education and healthcare.

Ms. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), called on countries to increase investment in population and protect sexual and reproductive health rights.

On April 29, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan delivered a statement during the plenary session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Ms. Bashimova, having acquainted with the national experience in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the ICPD Program of Action, emphasized in particular that:

- Turkmenistan is currently among the countries that have achieved the greatest reduction in maternal mortality and morbidity;
- With the assistance of UNFPA, 95 reproductive health rooms are operating in the

country with government funding;

- The proportion of the need for family planning has decreased to 9.7% and it is planned to bring it to 3.5% by 2030.
- As part of the activities of the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Foundation for Assistance to Children in Need of Care since 2021, a number of major projects and measures to protect children have been implemented.

On the same day, at the initiative of Turkmenistan, a side event was organized on the theme: “Advancing ICPD+30 commitments: national experiences and ways forward”.

The event was attended by Ms. Florence Bauer, UNFPA Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ms. Sheema Sen Gupta, UNICEF Director of Child Protection, Permanent Representatives and experts of the UN Member States.

Delivering her welcoming remarks, the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Aksoltan Ataeva reiterated that Turkmenistan is firmly committed to the implementation of the ICPD+30 principles, being a country that joined international obligations in 1994 within the framework of the Cairo Program of Action.

It was emphasized that practical activities continue at the national level to promote initiatives and long-term programs aimed at protecting the rights of the child and supporting children in need of guardianship.

The UNFPA Regional Director drew attention to the joint work in Turkmenistan on national surveys in the field of reproductive health, gender equality, increasing access to family planning and maternal health services, and achieving demographic sustainability. Work continues to improve social norms and empower women and girls.

The UNICEF representative emphasized the leading position of Turkmenistan in the protection of the rights of the child, as a country that has acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child since the first years of its independence.

It was emphasized that within the framework of Turkmenistan’s partnership with UNICEF, indicators in the field of maternal and child health have been significantly improved, the level of immunization coverage has been increased, and constant work is underway to implement family protection programs.

A special role in Turkmenistan’s cooperation with UNICEF is played by the joint activities

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within the framework of the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Foundation for Assistance to Children in Need of Care, established in 2021.

It was emphasized that the election of Turkmenistan to the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund for 2024-2026 is a recognition of the country's achievements in the promotion and implementation of the rights of the child.