

RESOLUTION

Of the International Conference

“Demographic challenges of the Republic of Moldova: causes, effects and ways of addressing them based on international experience”

Held on the 3rd of April 2018

Organized at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Moldova, with the participation of the United Nations, World Bank in Moldova and the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

The participants at the International Conference, aimed at raising public awareness about the demographic challenges in the Republic of Moldova and the urgent need to implement a series of coherent and ambitious actions to address the demographic challenges of the country:

Recognizing that the socio-demographic development of the Republic of Moldova is characterized by the continuous de-population, as well as low life expectancy, low fertility rate and high outflow of migration of the working-age population,

Realizing that the population forecasts show a continuous decline of the population, while its intensity can be reduced by urgently implementing coordinated and targeted policies aimed at reducing the negative impact of outward migration and enhancing its positive effects on the socio-economic development of the country, along with focusing on desired fertility and improving life expectancy,

Realizing that the gender inequalities in participating into economy and politics, as well as the wage gap and high scale of gender-based violence leads to uneven development of the society and significantly influences demographic processes,

Highlighting that, despite the measures undertaken under the *National Strategic Program on Demographic Security (2011-2025)*, the expected results were not achieved either due to the fact that the envisaged demographic objectives were not supported by changes in the economic and social fields, or minor relevance of proposed activities and low implementation rate resulting from the lack of effective cross-sector coordination,

Emphasizing that there is a significant gap in the territorial demographic security, which contributes to the deepening of the regional social inequality, the emergence of deprived and unattractive territories in terms of investments,

Noting that the massive migration of the population, especially of the economically productive young people, who are the key pillar for the sustainable development and economic competitiveness of the country, is likely to impact the process of demographic changes and affect the country's long-term development,

Noting that the massive migration of health care workers reduces the access of the population to health care and requires a review of the health policies,

Noting that the education and training system is insufficiently adapted to the labor market demand and requires the development and implementation of a coherent strategic framework to enhance the quality and relevance of education and training at all levels,

Mentioning that the objective of our national aspiration is to settle the Transnistrian conflict, which is one of the basic conditions for the sustainable development of our country, including for ensuring economic and social stability,

We are committed to continue to take actions to ensure that the demographic issues of the Republic Moldova become a preoccupation and a top priority for the political class, academia, civil society, as well as for the external actors supporting the development of the entire country.

In order to tackle the abovementioned problems, the participants in the conference put forward suggestions and recommendations to remedy the situation in different areas as follows:

I. A synchronized and multidimensional approach of the priorities related to the demographic perspective:

1. Involvement of all state institutions and civil society in shifting the approach of the National Strategic Program on Demographic Security for 2011-2025 from “demographic security” to a rights-based demographic policy agenda, as outlined in the Concept Vision on Population and Development approved by the National Commission on Population and Development in 2016;
2. Increase the role of the National Commission for Population and Development in promoting demographic policies based on human rights principles and grounded on robust population data;
3. Integration of the demographic factor into the socio-economic development strategies and policies, as well as those of the sector development, conjugation of planned activities and changes in the dynamics and the demographic structure;
4. Generation of official population forecasts (National Bureau of Statistics) and strengthening of analytical-information basis for the process of policy development, implementation and monitoring in the field of the population. Improvement of population data (birth, death, migration), consolidation of the NBS’ capacity for the 2020 Global Census Round;
5. Promotion of active family-friendly policies aimed at creating favorable conditions for couples to achieve their desired number of children (reintegration of women into the labor market, increase access to childcare services for children aged 0-3 years, access to sexual and reproductive health services) and ensuring adequate child health, growth, development and education;
6. To take all appropriate measures to ensure that children remaining behind whose parents have migrated abroad are taken care of and receive maintenance;
7. To implement policies that aim at promoting active aging, increasing the employment rate and labor productivity of older women and men, preventing early retirement;
8. Strengthening the human capital by increasing investment in education and health, thereby improving the health of the population, especially of young people, and increasing life expectancy, as well as increasing labor productivity;

9. Identification of the regional development priorities, development of the policies for strengthening cities and socio-economic poles for different regions, which will contribute to increasing the potential of the respective areas, attracting investments to different socio-economic regions, creating decent jobs, thus contributing to reducing the migratory population decline in low-employment regions.

II. Adaptation and modernization of the health care system to demographic transformations

10. Ensuring a comfortable level of social protection for citizens, by improving the efficiency of the pension system, the social aid system and health care services; ensuring fairness in the distribution of means, accumulated through contributions from the society, for social support;
11. Ensuring universal access to health services, including sexual and reproductive ones, especially for women and men of reproductive age and adolescent boys and girls from rural areas; ensuring safe maternity; introducing a comprehensive health and age-appropriate sexual education program into the school curriculum;
12. Improving the population health by increasing the accessibility to high-quality medical services for everyone and everywhere, especially for rural area; promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing risk behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol abuse, etc.;
13. Widening the service spectrum for the elderly people;
14. Urgently approving the National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health (2018-2022) and revising/ implementing the Action Plan on Human Resources in Health with emphasis on: i) employment, motivation and maintaining of the medical staff in the national health care system as per WHO recommendations; ii) realistic planning of the human resources in health and assuring those with appropriate education and training, iii) provision of medical staff to the rural areas, iv) strengthening the capacities of the primary health care system.

III. Migration as a new dominant on the demographic policy agenda in the Republic of Moldova

15. Decreasing the negative impact of migration, reducing incidents of forced migration by ensuring a decent standard of living; promoting and capitalizing on the circular migration schemes, including of highly qualified specialists by increasing wages, improving working conditions, and ensuring the prerequisites for professional growth in Moldova;
16. Expanding communication with Moldovan diaspora, engaging the diaspora in the development and decision-making processes at local and national level; supporting projects implemented by diaspora organizations;
17. Creating prerequisites for comprehensive and multidimensional reintegration of returning migrants, including the empowerment of local public administration authorities of 1st level in the field of employment, social protection, information and monitoring of returning migrants;

18. Providing financial, in-kind, and psychological support, employment counseling and career development opportunities for the reintegration of migrants in difficult situations, including through improving the legislative framework (documentation, social protection, access to the labor market), and strengthening social assistance capacities;
19. Increasing cooperation between the state institutions of the Republic of Moldova and the state institutions of the host countries of the Moldovan migrants in the following areas: statistics, accounting and monitoring of the migration flow, in order to ensure the legal rights of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and their social protection and facilitate the repatriation of their pensions and other entitlements, the voluntary returns of the Moldovan citizens in a difficult situation, including through Republic of Moldova – EU Mobility Partnership;
20. Developing and implementing innovative policies, programs and services to channel remittances into the productive sectors of the Moldovan economy (such as PARE 1 + 1 + 2 Program);
21. Increased cooperation between public authorities, civil society and the academia in the field of research and regulation of migration processes and diaspora policies;
22. Harness the potential of immigrants to invest and innovate (skills, abilities, networks, know-how) by facilitating immigration and investment procedures and opportunities in the Moldovan economy (including tax and financial incentives / guarantees).

IV. Enhancing labour market for adequate response to demographic shifts

23. The creation of a pro-employment macroeconomic framework - including an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and structural transformation – in order to stimulate the offer of decent jobs through the private sector growth;
24. To ensure a better coordination of employment policies to promote a proactive, inclusive, gender-responsive, properly funded and coordinated demand and supply-side measures;
25. To enhance skills development systems by making them more responsive and adapted to labour market changes and technological developments; increasing the role of the private sector in skills development by creating more opportunities for apprenticeship, dual learning, on-the-job training, internship, etc.; better functioning of the tripartite sector skills committees and their contribution to the quality and relevance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) outputs;
26. The implementation and assessment of programmes that facilitate the school-to-work transition for young women and men including the disadvantaged youth layer. Building and supporting a youth entrepreneurship culture;
27. To develop policies and programmes to address the aging of the society and shrinking of working-age population in order to enable productivity growth, to address labour shortages and to promote the labour market entry of population groups that are not yet fully active. Promoting policies and programmes targeted on NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or

Training) women, talented people with disabilities, adult workers based on life and work balance, care economy and active aging;

28. To upgrade the working conditions with regard to wage, working time, contractual arrangements and employment protection. Promotion of formal employment;
29. The improvement of labour market governance through more effective and inclusive employment services and active labour market policies, including outreach to disadvantaged groups and workers in the informal economy. Enrichment of labour market information in order to enable informed decision making with respect to employment and decent work.