



Statement by the Government of Bulgaria

Delivered by Honourable Petar Mladenov, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Bulgaria;

**On the occasion of the
High-level event in the margins of the Summit of the Future under the auspices of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights: advancing the agenda for a sustainable future

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[Transcribed by PMNCH]

It is a pleasure to be here with so many youth activists, fellow member states, and members of the international community. This event is particularly significant as it coincides with the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the *Program of Action* from the International Conference on Population and Development. This agreement remains one of the most progressive frameworks we have, and we hope that yesterday's adoption of *The Future We Want* will enable us to continue this path more sustainably to achieve better conditions for adolescents and young people, particularly in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Focusing on my country, Bulgaria, investing in adolescents and young people's potential, health, and well-being is a top priority. This commitment aligns with our National Youth Strategy, a multisectoral vision document that synergizes with the UN 2030 Agenda and the European Youth Strategy. Given the cross-sectoral nature of this policy, we aim to partner with various decision-makers and central bodies to ensure a holistic approach to unlocking young people's potential.

In terms of funding, Bulgaria's overall budget for youth policies is close to €5 million, with approximately 85% of this funding outsourced to youth-led and youth-serving organizations. We believe in meaningful youth engagement and recognize that these organizations are best equipped to work with the most left-behind populations. Our policies are informed by data and evidence, and the thematic areas of our National Youth Programs are based on comprehensive needs assessments. This approach ensures we address the specific needs of young people and support their professional and personal development.

To support this vision, we have established eight International Youth Centers in partnership with the Ministry of Education and with financial support from the Norwegian European Fund Program. These centers serve as one-stop hubs for psychosocial support, international training, and volunteer opportunities. By 2026, we aim to build 20 more centers, covering all

administrative regions in Bulgaria. This expansion will enable us to reach young people living in rural and hard-to-reach areas and provide them with valuable opportunities.

In these centers, with the support of local municipalities, we are committed to offering social support services and access to sexual and reproductive health information, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). This is crucial, especially given the rising opposition to SRHR and CSE.

To conclude, effective coordination relies on a bottom-up approach to truly reach those in need. By the next event, I hope to present data demonstrating how we have successfully reached adolescents and young people through CSE in these 21 youth centers across Bulgaria.

Thank you.