

Address by **Sergei Rachkov**, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus for Foreign Affairs and National Security,  
to the 142<sup>nd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues!

The theme of the General Debate of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is relevant to all States, including Belarus.

Belarus consciously chose measures to combat the pandemic. The country refrained from bans and quarantines taking into account the long-term forecast of their negative impact on the life of the Belarusians and socio-economic development. The measures taken are targeted, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable groups of the population and sectors of the economy. The chosen response model has proven its effectiveness.

We have maintained a comprehensive system of sanitary and epidemiological services and primary health care facilities.

At the government level, an interdepartmental working group is functioning under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister. Regulatory legal acts have been adopted to determine measures to prevent the import and spread of COVID-19.

The government approved a set of measures to ensure the stable operation of the economy with the due account of the epidemiological situation in the world. The Presidential Decree on economic support was adopted to minimize the impact of the epidemiological situation in the

world on the Belarusian economy. In light of the beginning of the third wave of the epidemic, the Belarusian authorities continue to take active measures to strengthen sanitary and epidemiological control, improve the material basis of the health care system and prevent infection among the population, including through close attention to the use of face masks and physical distancing.

Government efforts are focused on providing citizens with vaccines. Medical and social workers, and teachers were vaccinated in February and March. Since April, mass vaccination campaign has started.

In Belarus, people are vaccinated against the coronavirus with two vaccines – the Russian "Sputnik V" and the Chinese Vero Cell (Sinopharm). The vaccine-filling of the industrial series of the "Sputnik V" has started at Belmedpreparaty, Belarusian pharmaceutical manufacturer.

In the fight against the pandemic, Belarus closely follows the WHO recommendations and studies international experience in order to apply it in the organization of the work of the national health care system. The country works closely with the WHO European Office and the office in Minsk. At the invitation of Belarus, the WHO mission visited our country in the spring of 2020. The UN country team in Belarus, together with the national stakeholders, have developed a plan to respond to the long-term socio-economic consequences of the pandemic in Belarus.

We believe that a major role in the fight against the pandemic belongs to the international cooperation aimed at sharing information, best practices, skills, and data, as well as ensuring universal access to the vaccines.

Belarus supports the WHO Director-General's initiative to develop a Convention on pandemic preparedness and response to health emergencies.

Dear colleagues!

Parliamentarians have the strongest connection with citizens, because these people are our voters. In the post-coronavirus era, people, their concerns and problems should be the prime focus of legislative and other parliamentary activities.

I wish you all fruitful work at the 142<sup>nd</sup> Assembly to develop common approaches and effective measures of the global parliamentary dimension to overcome the pandemic.