

1. **Mr. Chairman,**
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

North Macedonia has aligned with the statement of the European Union, but I would like to make few remarks in my national capacity.

The drugs phenomenon remains a serious and complex global problem. Drugs pose a threat to the safety, security, health and wellbeing, and to the prosperity of people, especially the youth. It encompasses an array of intertwined aspects, each of which is a challenge in itself.

Therefore, a broad set of measures that consist of prevention, treatment, social reintegration, legislation, including law enforcement are needed, especially bearing in mind that the use of drugs, illegal drug production and trafficking are highly dynamic, and are constantly changing.

2. Drug abuse and drug-addiction diseases are also related to the global social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, delinquency, crime, and homelessness, while drug-crime turnover may significantly affect social stability, social development, and democratic processes, and cause suffering of both the individual and the family.

For example, worldwide, the number of persons infected and suffering from tuberculosis is increasing among those who use drugs. Furthermore, not only does the risk of mortality increase when drugs are administered intravenously, it also causes these people to become vectors for transmission of contagious diseases, especially of AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne and sexually transmitted diseases and infections.

Mr. Chairman,

No single country can be fully effective in treating drug-related issues by itself. Coherent and consistent drug policies in addition to coordinated activities and regional and international cooperation is required. In that context, recalling last year Ministerial Declaration, we fully supports the call to implement our commitments more effectively in addressing the world drug problem.



3. Mr. Chairman,

North Macedonia is currently implementing its second national strategy for drugs covering the period 2014–2020, aimed at providing a balanced approach to implementing all parts of the strategy and all elements related to the drug problem, based on evidence obtained from practice as well as by conducting scientific research and assessment of the situation, and in parallel, by devising measures for overcoming the problem.

With the support of the United Nations and European Union and through exchange of good practices, experiences and knowledge with related institutions and professionals from a number of UN including EU member states the country has significantly improved the quality and comparability of available information. According to the register of the Ministry of the Interior, the most prevalent drugs in the country are cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and ecstasy.

Currently, the development of the third national strategy for drugs is in progress.

The country will focus on establishing a single statistical data collecting system at the national level, and on enhancing three major pillars, namely, prevention, treatment, and resocialization and reintegration. At the same time, it will remain actively engaged in monitoring the dynamics of illegal drug markets, including the changes in drug trafficking routes, the cross-border drug trafficking, and the use of new communication technologies, as well as preventing the use of chemicals that can be abused as precursors for illegal drug production.



4. Mr. Chairman,

North Macedonia is proud to share positive examples of programs for reducing drug abuses, having 15 such programs in total. These programs enable adequate health and social services in 13 towns and to more than 2,500 persons who use opiates, thus reducing the harmful effect of drug abuse, especially those related to the spread of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other sexually transmitted and blood-borne diseases and infections.

Furthermore, providing social protection and assistance to this target group is an integral part of the Social Protection of Socially Excluded Persons program of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. One of the activities of the Ministry's policies is the development of social services for resocialization of drug users, provided in the Center for Social Rehabilitation, and via the Program for Social Rehabilitation in a Therapeutic Community, supported with funds from the Ministry's budget.

The Republic of North Macedonia puts a special emphasis on enhancing the prevention system as successful examples of preventive measures in youth education undertaken in the country are the following projects:

- 1) Life Skills Education Syllabus
- 2) Health Promotion Elective Subject
- 3) Civil Education Concept

Thank you for your attention.

