

Your excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the name of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, I would like to use the floor to further elaborate on our remarks expressed during the High-level plenary session.

Sexual and reproductive health is a priority of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

We are aware of and have documented the challenges in achieving better health outcomes of our people and the state of some of the health indicators such as the higher than the EU average of neonatal mortality rates, the limited access to and utilization of sexual and reproductive health services such as family planning, contraception and abortion. Even though we maintained low HIV prevalence in the general population, we are aware of the increasing HIV incidence among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and we are committed to advancing the current situation.

Therefore, on the basis on an assessment of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2018-2020 we designed and adopted a National Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health for the period of 2018-2020.

It is a comprehensive plan designed according to the regional priorities and adapted to the national context. The strategic areas of the plan are inter-sectoral cooperation, because we recognize that improving the sexual and reproductive health outcomes does not only depend on the health interventions, but also on addressing the social determinants of health such as poverty, gender, education, employment etc., then family planning, sexual and reproductive health of young people and adolescents, maternal and neonatal health, safe abortion, gender-based violence, prevention and early detection of cervical and breast cancer and HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

In addition, the plan is costed and financially supported though the preventative and curative programs of the Ministry of Health and is implemented with the support of other national and international partners.

We expect that this approach will contribute to strengthening the capacities of the institutions and service providers, will improve the availability, access to and utilization of sexual and reproductive health services and will improve the sexual and reproductive health outcomes of the people of the Republic of Macedonia.

Thank you!