

SEVENTIETH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
*General Discussions “Advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
Building Better Systems for Health”*

Joint Statement

delivered by Mrs. Ruxanda GLAVAN in her capacity as
Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova
and President of the SEE Health Network
Geneva, 24 May 2017

**Madame President,
Madame Director General, Director General-elect,
Distinguished delegates,**

May I start by expressing Moldova’s condemnation in the strongest terms of the cruel attack on human lives produced in Manchester, United Kingdom. We express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.

Now, let me turn to a more pleasant subject and congratulate Dr. Tedros for his election as the new Director General of the World Health Organisation. His extended experience, both in public health and diplomacy will certainly be valuable assets in performing the difficult task of reshaping the Organisation’s role as the global leader in health policy. The Republic of Moldova looks forward to working with you – Director General-elect.

This is one of the many ambitious goals we, the Member States have put forward for the new DG, for ourselves nationally and globally as a community. The essence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to “Leave no one behind” and this statement cannot be any truer than for the health systems.

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, at all ages requires effective mechanisms of collaboration across and within sectors, and conversely: achieving progress in good health and well-being is essential for implementing other Sustainable Development Goals.

For this purpose, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has established in July 2016 a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, which is responsible for leading the efforts of including SDGs indicators and targets into national policies and monitoring their implementation.

Distinguished delegates,

The Republic of Moldova is strongly committed to transforming goals into actions and by taking small steps, with strong support from the WHO and other partners we are

firmly moving to achieving the indicators we have set in the 2030 Agenda, particularly with regard to health.

In 2016 we have managed to overcome a systemic problem of shortages of medicines and medical supplies by reforming the procurement system. The creation of a centralized procurement agency for health has eliminated the impending risk of medicine shortages and brought prices down by 30%, thus ensuring a sustainable and predictable supply for the national health system. Another direct result of this reform is improved access to medicines: in January 2017 we have enrolled 3500 patients in a treatment program with Direct Anti-virals; and we will continue advancing in achieving our objectives in ending the epidemics of Hepatitis.

Another positive example is the 2015 anti-tobacco law that is already showing significant improvements in health indicators: the number of hospitalizations due to asthma decreased by 15% compared to the same period last year, when smoking was allowed in public spaces and at the workplace.

In 2016 WHO validated the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in the Republic of Moldova, meaning that so many more children can have a disease-free start in life.

No doubt that these are small scale achievements in comparison to the challenges we face but at the same time these are positive signs that our ambitious goals are achievable.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal and Moldovan Government's most sincere appreciation to Dr. Margaret Chan for her visionary leadership, support, dedication and for putting people first. The Republic of Moldova wishes that health concerns will unite us all and make this organization much stronger, under the new leadership and we look forward to the mandate of the new Director General of the WHO.

Distinguished delegates,

Now, allow me to address you in my capacity as **President of the South East Europe Health Network.**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the **9 Member States of the South East Europe Health Network**, who have associated themselves with this statement: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the State of Israel, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania and the Republic of Serbia.

The South East Europe Health Network celebrated this year the 15 years of a great Regional Alliance for Health through its **4th Ministerial Forum "Health, Well-Being**

and Prosperity in South-Eastern Europe by 2030 in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” recently held in Chisinau.

I am pleased to share with all my colleagues, the Ministers of Health of all the countries world-wide, the outcome decision, commitment and signed document of this high level Ministerial Forum: the **Chisinau Pledge**. We strongly believe that our commitment and the policy directions we have agreed to, will contribute to implementing the global UN and WHO agenda and the SDGs. We are ready to share with any other region, group of countries or individual States our experiences and the lessons learned.

I am pleased to state here, on behalf of my colleagues, the Ministers of Health of the 9 South East Europe countries, that we are committed to implement the Chisinau Pledge, which will be providing us with strategic guidance and will serve as a framework to boost interventions in the following areas:

1. *Sustaining and strengthening the regional cooperation in public health by:*
taking deliberate action to influence governance in other policy arenas to promote and protect health.

2. *Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by:*
taking advantage of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to renew countries’ commitments to health and to seek intersectoral action to advance the priorities of the European “Health 2020” policy framework towards 2030;

3. *Striving towards universal health coverage for our populations by:*
increasing health funding; ensuring financial risk protection, ensuring access to high-quality essential healthcare and public health services and to safe, effective, efficient, high-quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all; and recruiting, developing, training and retaining the health workforce.

4. *Further upgrading public health services and capacities by:*
establishing a SEE Health Network platform on cross-border issues in public health services.

5. *Further strengthening our mutual regional and national action preparedness and response to regional emergencies and related population movement and migration.*

6. *Working more closely and efficiently with our partners to make the best use of their unprecedented support by:*

implementing whole-of-government, whole-of-society and health-in-all-policies approaches in policy development.

7. *The governments of the South East Europe Health Network’s member countries acknowledged the need:*

to achieve policy coherence between global goals and the South East Europe Health Network member countries' contexts, among international agendas, among economic, social and environment policies.

And finally,

8. *We look to partner organizations:*

- to establish policy and regulatory frameworks that enable business and industry to advance sustainable development initiatives, taking account of the importance of corporate social responsibility;
- to facilitate the exchange of information and lessons learned and to build knowledge and best practice on health across the region and beyond through participation in congresses, meetings, conferences and symposia organized by the South East Europe Health Network; and
- to support the increased visibility of the South East Europe Health Network and identify associated opportunities for exchange within the Network, at the European and global levels.

I would like to use this occasion and express true gratitude to the World Health Organization and in particular to its European Regional Office and our Regional Director, Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab for her tremendous support over the last years to the South East Europe Health Network, which makes the Region's voice heard, for supporting us to advance public health gains and our genuine aim and commitment to achieve the SDGs.

The SEE Health Network considers the work of the WHA 70th Session of high importance and value to us and we sincerely wish excellent deliberations to take us forward.

I thank you for your attention.