



THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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by

H.E. Nikola Gruevski

President of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

at

the United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 Development Agenda

27 September 2015

NEW YORK

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered at this Summit to adopt a bold and universal agenda for ending poverty, improving the well-being of citizens and protecting our planet. I would like to pay tribute to all Member States and other relevant actors who have worked tirelessly on the outcome document to be adopted at the Summit: “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that are in this document will be our guiding light in crafting the future for our countries and citizens. The vision for a more stable, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and environmentally sustainable world can only be accomplished if we join forces and work together in partnership on a global, regional, national and local level.

The Central European Initiative which the Republic of Macedonia is currently presiding over, wants to be actively engaged in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, and the Member States express their readiness to make a concrete regional contribution, to transfer know-how and exchange the best practices in different sustainable development initiatives, capacity building of public institutions and in awareness raising.

The Republic of Macedonia is contributing actively to common goals. After the Conference in Rio we have commenced with the integration of the principles of sustainable development in our national policies. The National Council for Sustainable Development was established and a National Sustainable Development Strategy was adopted. This July we made a review on the progress in the implementation of the Strategy, which has been communicated to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Division for Sustainable Development. The next step would be to integrate the SDGs into our strategic documents, including the Sustainable Development Action Plan. We expect to receive support on this under the new UNDAF- United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2016-2020, which is developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. We consulted the NGOs and their comments were taken into consideration when the Government answered the UN Questionnaire related to the preparation of the Secretary General’s initial input to the Open Working Group.

We increased social transfers for socially vulnerable persons by over 50%; special financial benefits were introduced and increased for the vulnerable categories, especially for children without parental care, and we exempted the private sector employers from payroll taxes for their employment for a period of five or more years. As a result of foreign investment and support for the private sector, unemployment in our country was reduced by over 11%. The concept of free health care for every citizen has been introduced, we are investing in medical equipment and infrastructure and the prices of pharmaceuticals have been reduced and we are financing the farmers through high budget subsidies.

For the young people, the education budget is 5-6 % of GDP, at the level of OECD countries. In primary education we implemented the Cambridge curriculum for mathematics and natural sciences; the learning of English language starts in the first grade and the learning of a second foreign language in the sixth grade. We have provided a computer for every child in primary and secondary schools, as well as 80 modern laboratories for the development of scientific research. We enable full scholarship for each citizen who manages to enrol at one of the top 100 universities in the world, that is, 200 universities in the area of natural sciences.

For the employment of people under 35 the state pays contributions for social insurance and personal income tax. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 - achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, we are committed to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, especially in stopping human trafficking for which we have been receiving the highest assessment from the US State Department. We are improving the economic status of women through special programs and financing of women-managers, women in agriculture, incentives for employment of single mothers, extension of maternity leave and special protection for employed mothers, promotion of increased participation of women in political life, as well as measures for promotion of sexual and reproductive health.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Taking into consideration that there should be a difference in the responsibilities of countries at a different level of development, as well as a just distribution of the burden of sustainable development, especially in the area of

climate change and pollution, still, each country should find its own strength and bear a fair share of the burden for its own development.

Let us deliver together what we have committed to jointly today for the future we want. This 70th anniversary of the United Nations obligates us even more to perform better.

Thank you.