



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
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Statement

by

H.E. Igor Dzundev
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations,

at the

High Level Meeting of the UN on HIV/AIDS

New York, 2 June 2006

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguish delegates,

The Republic of Macedonia has aligned with the EU statement but I would like to point out several issues of our concern.

Macedonia is low prevalence country with the lowest clinical diagnostic rate of incidence in the region, as well as in whole Europe. However, the regional trends indicate that there is a potential for increased spread of HIV infection.

A national strategy for HIV/AIDS (2003-2006) has been developed. Priority areas and interventions within the strategy are focused on prevention of possible epidemic of HIV infection through multisectorial approach and collaboration of the government, local communities, civil society, international organizations, private sector and media.

Nearly 50% of the country's response is built on prevention strategies, both among youth, as well as other groups with high-risk behaviour, such as needle exchange and drug substitution programs.

Within the National strategy for HIV/AIDS policies and programs have been defined as to protect and promote the health of the groups that are of a greater risk for infection, such as IDUs, CSW, MSM, mobile groups and Roma community. Specific policy on youth is under preparation focusing on young people and their sufficient access to information on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS through including HIV/AIDS/STIs prevention in school curricula.

The Government has made progress in increasing the engagement of non-governmental sectors in the development, implementation and oversight of the national response to HIV/AIDS mainly through CCM and Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms established.

The Country Coordination Mechanism intends to submit a new application for a five year program on the sixth call for proposals recently announced by the Global Fund.

The issue of a particular concern is the price of the drugs. The market for antiretroviral drugs in most countries in the region is still modest, as the epidemic is young and relatively few people are in immediate need of treatment at this stage. The limited demand does not create strong incentives for pharmaceutical companies to ensure registration of, and negotiate price reductions for antiretroviral drugs and other HIV-related commodities. So we need different approach – exploring bilateral and/or regional mechanisms.

Mr President,

In the past two days all of us coming from different parts of the world extensively discussed our different but yet similar problems experienced in the fight against the HIV/AIDS.

And one can conclude that since 2001 we have made progress, but much remains to be done. The magnitude of this pandemic shows that clearly. The challenge is even more complex because this global scourge affects us in many ways: in terms of treatment, stigmatization, availability of drugs, efforts to find possible cure, even survival in some parts of the world. All of our societies are being affected in one way or another. This is our common fight. Not a fight of an individual or of a particular affected population or a nation. There is no borders, no walls of protection.

Sustainable and predictable financing, strengthening of M&E mechanisms and using the resources efficiently and effectively are key points to support national HIV/AIDS programs set up to reach people.

Global and regional solutions offered at this meeting, if implemented, can make a difference. Prevention is the only way to reverse the trend of pandemic. It means education, information, training at all levels of the society, awareness.

So we must today recommit ourselves to jointly work on ensuring new tools, new mechanisms. To further identify problems, obstacles, constraints, to continue to fight false myths, prejudices and to continue working with a renewed energy and spirit (that were so clearly manifested) on the implementation of the agreed document. Nothing new, one may say, but there is no alternative to persistent commitment to the accomplishment of the goals we have agreed upon. We must not fail.

Thank you.