



**GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

**STATEMENT**

**by the President of the Government of North Macedonia**

**H.E.Mr. Dimitar Kovachevski**

**At the Leaders Round Tables (15:00-16:30)**

**Transforming Education Summit**

**(Trusteeship Council Chamber)**

*New York, September 19, 2022*

Distinguished Excellencies,  
Colleagues,

Dear Delegates,

Whenever I speak about the importance of education, I remember the well-known saying that “Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

I would say that this is especially relevant today, as UN Secretary General Guterres consistently underscored that the outcome of good education in the XXI century means: learning to learn; learning to live together, learning to do, and learning to be. I do concur and support such education outcomes.

I truly believe that education is not just what you are taught in lessons at school, but what are the values a young student is instilled with. I will be first to acknowledge that in my country, North Macedonia, we still have a long way to reach the level of education quality that I would be happy with. Indeed, the true transformation of my country into a formal European member lies first and foremost with our ability to look very hard at ourselves, understand our shortcomings, and getting into the mindset that our future depends on us, on what we do, on what we can accomplish with our own two hands. This being said, we are committed to create conditions and environment that will enable students to thrive and and fulfill their potentials.

Learning to learn means acquiring literacy, but also developing critical thinking and skills to analyse, research, make decision, thus developing potentials of our future doctors, scientists, builders, future leaders, upon whom our world will rely.

It is only people who have the ability and capacity to think critically who can be courageous enough to stand in defence of law and justice, and who will know to fight their battles using arguments and not violence.

At this juncture, let me focus on the efforts pursued by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in this respect.

- We have introduced completely new curricula for the first and fourth grade of primary education, which change the approach to teaching, setting it up on the principle of encouraging critical thinking, which on its part is the overarching goal of the entire education process.
- Pursuing the commitment to ensuring equitable education, we are advancing inclusivity, motivating thus students to learn to live together. Being a successful model of a multi-ethnic society, we work with dedication towards social integration in ethnic, cultural, and social terms. Teaching assistants have been employed to provide direct support in classrooms to students with disabilities in regular primary schools. We have provided textbooks in electronic, audio and in Braille format for children with atypical development.
- Committed to overcoming income derived differences, we have introduced subsidized meals for every student. This is part of the efforts to ensure equal access to meals for young

people at universities. In addition, each year scholarships are provided for secondary school and university students, awarded on a number of grounds, such as income or academic success.

- We are working to advance secondary vocational education in order that students who do not intend to continue with university education could acquire the necessary qualifications. This is our contribution to the goal of learning to do. Guided by the principle of lifelong learning, designing various programs we have facilitated requalification and completion of qualifications, which on its part helps acquire skills and knowledge promptly in professions that are in demand on the labour market.
- Learning our lessons after dealing with the pandemic, we concentrated our efforts on providing necessary IT devices, interactive school boards, teaching aids, and equipment for classrooms for specific subjects, with the ultimate goal of providing digitalized teaching. We stand ready to continually invest in strengthening digital competences of teachers and in improving the digital infrastructure in schools.
- In light of the fact that scientific innovations have become a priority precondition for progress, last year for the first time ever, we introduced scholarships for the third cycle of studies, in scientific areas such as natural sciences and mathematics and technical - technological sciences. Learning to be, demands developing innovation and creative potentials, especially of young people. Hence, we invest laborious efforts in this area.
- I should like to underscore the development and implementation of the project for cooperation between universities in North Macedonia and universities in other Balkan countries, as well as with universities in Italy and in Greece. This project is implemented under the ERASMUS Strategic Partnership for post-graduate studies, entitled “Geo-philosophy of the Balkans.” This a particularly important project considering that it is for the first time that such type of regional cooperation in education is developed.

The policies we pursue, are aligned with the global commitments to developing an education system, which helps build a society able to effectively deal with newly emerging challenges. The ramifications of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine have proven this as a necessity to us all. I am confident that science and innovations lead to sustainable changes that will improve the lives of all our citizens.

I would like to assure you that the Republic of North Macedonia stands in solidarity with the democratic world, supporting and joining the commitments to building a sustainable education system, founded on high quality standards and accessible to all.

For decades now, various education models have been pursued and many changes have been introduced in my country. However, in line with the thus far discussion at this debate, I believe that by focused implementation of our 2022-2024 National Development Strategy and the ongoing 2018-2025 Strategy on Education we are setting our education system on the right path of development.

As these efforts are our long-term commitment, at this point, I believe that it is of utmost importance to draw your attention to one great challenge standing before all of us this winter, that is rather immediate. The energy crisis, that North Macedonia, Europe and the world is dealing with poses a real threat to the educational process. To reach the long-term goals, firstly we have to ensure that we have enough resources to secure elementary working and living conditions, such as warm and lit classrooms and warm and lit homes so our students can have uninterrupted, quality education this winter. This is priority no. 1, today, tomorrow and in the upcoming long winter months.

The answer to these challenges, is only through mutual international and inter-regional cooperation. But most of all – through solidarity. If we want our students to grow up with good education, we must show them first how we the adults can solve problems together. Otherwise, no education model or development strategy will make a difference or mean anything to them.

Knowledge is the key to overcoming challenges current times bring. And the challenges, as we see, are enormous.

Making concerted efforts, as we are doing at this Summit and also by working together, we will find solutions to what stands before us and achieve progress.

Thank you for your attention.