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Health and population dynamics
MNE–SI speaking points for 4th meeting of OWG SDGs

- Population dynamics is one of the main trends to be considered by every country as well as international community when designing policies and activities in different fields of sustainable development. Trends such as population growth, increasing migration flows and changing demographics, should be taken into account when elaborating future SDGs.
- We have expressed our commitment to human rights based approach in designing future overarching post-2015 framework. Respect for human rights, as well as gender-responsive measures, will be especially important in addressing different challenges of population dynamics. Important human rights element pertaining to population dynamics is also ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Health is closely linked with population dynamics as well as with many other issues pertaining to sustainable development. For instance, according to the WHO, 25% of global burden of diseases is attributable to the environmental factors (polluted environment). On the other hand, there is growing evidence on socio-economic determinants of health. Person's social and economic status influences his access to health services, choices that contribute to healthy or unhealthy lifestyles, etc.
- Health-related MDGs contributed to impressive health progress globally. But gaps in their fulfilment remain and they should be appropriately addressed in the future framework. However, new realities and emerging challenges in the field of health, such as the growing human and economic burden of non-communicable diseases, need to be included as well.
- One of the important challenges is the prevention of stagnation or even worsening of the population health. For addressing the challenge appropriate prevention strategies have to be implemented. They have to include measures for ensuring an adequate level of a stable access to health care and health promotion, drivers for an equitable health system as a whole and drivers for protecting health through a mixture of interventions for individual as well as at the population.
- We would also like to stress that women have important role in ensuring population health, including through promoting healthy lifestyles and as care-givers.
- We are aware of the importance of emerging issues and are already addressing them. Slovenian and Montenegrin health policy priorities are already addressing the changing epidemiological pattern and are increasingly dealing with the comprehensive management of non-communicable diseases and mental health.

- Inequities and inequalities should be addressed through strengthening accessibility and inclusiveness of health systems. Slovenian health system already provides for financial relief for the vulnerable population groups as well as special services at the primary care level for children and youth and for women. Montenegrin health system has universal coverage as a core societal value, while additional efforts and activities are being conducted to ensure that vulnerable groups, in particular refugees and displaced person and Roma, have equal access.
- Our goal in including health into SDGs and broader post-2015 framework should be to maximize healthy lives. This depends on many diverse factors, including environmental, social and economic determinants of health, as well as education and promotion of healthy lifestyles in all age-groups as well as equally among men and women. Education for health should be continuous from early age. On national level Slovenia contributes to this through "Healthy School" programme which aims to raise awareness of school children about health and promotes healthy lifestyle choices. In Montenegro, more than half of the schools at both elementary and secondary level have introduced *Healthy lifestyles* as an elective subject, while its key messages are now being incorporated throughout the school curricula.
- Allow me also to stress the importance of sustainable financing of health care as a declining health care will result in severe consequences in health for the next generation as much as there had been improvement in the previous period. However, financing needs to be based on domestic resources, complemented by international resources where needed, especially in order to maximize the mobilization and impact of domestic resources. Much can be also done through investments for effective promotion, preventive and primary care services as well as through improved governance, coordination and reduction of inefficiencies in health services.
- We would also like to point out the positive impacts of regional and international cooperation on health issues for better health of population. Montenegro and Slovenia, as member and as a partner country respectively, cooperate in South-Eastern Europe Health Network. It is one of excellent examples of widely internationally recognized successful regional cooperation in the field of public health aiming at improving the functioning of public health systems and consequently health status of the citizens, diminishing health inequalities inside the particular member states, among the individual member states as well as in the region as a whole.
- Allow us to recall our general position towards the elaboration of SDGs that should be evidence-based and have measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators that will help to ensure full implementation potential of the visions we are certain we will create together in this process.