

**Ms. Biljana Dodevska Stojanovska, State Councillor in the Ministry of Economy,
Republic of Macedonia**

**“How to deepen the implementation of CEFTA in the framework of South East Europe
Strategy 2020”**

Respected Chair

Respected representatives,

I would like to express my gratitude to our host for today's meeting and the efforts in organizing of this regular annual meeting that I consider will contribute significantly for the implementation of concrete activities that would help the implementation of CEFTA.

The agreement this year also imposes challenges and obligations on us that result from the accession of some members and the pre-accession negotiations that the other members lead with EU. At the same time, significant is the diversification of the activities per different obligations and the deadlines that we need to respect for their realization. The level of interaction and complementarily is significantly increased among the priorities, the work of the sub-committees and the realization of the projects in relation to CEFTA.

Macedonia as chair of two sub committees: on TBT and NTB and customs issues, during its chairmanship this year due to supporting of the implementation of CEFTA has focused on concretization of the elements and instruments for monitoring of the non-tariff barriers with purpose to reduce and eliminate the unnecessary activities and documents that obstruct the regional trade.

I would like to emphasize also the significance of the transparency and information as one of the elements for cooperation among CEFTA parties for elimination of these barriers. In that direction I would like to emphasize the importance of the Trade web portal of the CEFTA parties, the PEM convention, TBT Platform, starting active negotiation on text of Agreement on conformity assessment of industrial product, as well other trade issues referring to create relevant position of „integrated growth among CEFTA Parties, aimed mainly for the business community of the CEFTA parties where on regular base to support their work.

I would like to express gratitude for all of the other regional projects that have influence on the achievement of the CEFTA priorities. This especially towards the advancement of the trade and elimination of the trade barriers and hope that the CEFTA Parties will achieve significant benefit from the agreement stimulated by the support of donors. That achievement will be followed by Strategy 2020, especially pillar I, covering main activities in line with implementation of CEFTA Agreement.

As Macedonia is chairing with CEFTA next, this Strategy will be in its priority. As priority later at this meeting will be elaborated in more details.

At the end, allow me to thank Croatia for being active within CEFTA and good luck in the new family as new member in EU, also congratulation to Moldova for concluding FTA with EU, and thanks to the Chair, the Bosnia and Herzegovina and all of the participants that from the start of this year made constructive efforts with purpose of realization of the priorities in the annual program of work in the framework of realization of the Agreement.

Thank you,