*Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

First of all I would like to thank the hosts for organising the opening ceremony for the Headquarters of the Standing Organisation of the Balkan Medical Task Force, His Excellency, Minister Jolevski for the hospitality shown, and to congratulate all the participants in the process of building the Balkan Medical Task Force on their work done and contribution provided so far.

As we all know very well, at this moment, all the countries of our region are facing the same or highly similar challenges, risks and threats which call for a joint response in order to resolve them and stress the need for a unified approach for the purpose of maintaining international security.

Likewise, as a part of the region which went through a very difficult period, the Republic of Serbia attaches particular significance to the regional cooperation along with a constant development of good neighbourly relations and mutual understanding, which is in such circumstances of extreme importance.

Unfortunately, we are the witnesses of ever more common natural disasters which strike our region, and that is why the project of the Balkan Medical Task Force enables the states, in given moments, to use their medical forces and resources more efficiently, and it is the best example of the functioning of the “pooling and sharing” principle. They represent a unit that will be capable of providing medical support in crisis and to react quickly in order to eliminate the effects of disasters in the region.

*Dear Colleagues,*

Apart from the significant engagement in multinational operations, the Republic of Serbia has earmarked its capacities for the role of the BMTF Framework nation in the first rotation that will last until the end of 2019. It will also invest its efforts, together with other Participants and partner states, to make the BMTF a recognised and renowned force of the region. If, in the following rotations, Macedonia and Slovenia as Framework nations continue enhancing the capabilities of that unit, I am confident that the BMTF will become our regional “brand”.

Wise Ghandi said: “Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possibly that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning”. In this respect, I perceive today’s opening of the Headquarters of the Standing Organisation of the Balkan Medical Task Force to be the first step towards making the common vision a reality and towards achieving the common goal.

At the end of my address, I would, once again, like to express gratitude to partner countries, the United States of America and Norway, for the support rendered to the BMTF project so far. I am sure that the benefits from the establishment of such a unit in the region will be enjoyed by all the Participants.

*Thank you for your attention.*