

**Mr. Jon Kahn
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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The ongoing work on environment and sustainable development in the SEE region is welcome, needed and should be further supported. Under the framework of sustainable development Sweden contributes to institutional strengthening and capacity building of partners in the region. In fact, when Sweden now has reduced the number of country co-operation partners over the world, this region still is prioritized.

We support the development of an effective management of chemicals, nature conservation and water.

Building confidence and co-operation across borders is essential. The work for this conference in taking forward joint initiatives is part of that cooperation. More significant is the trans-boundary water co-operation that has been started in western Balkan which is of special importance to address common interests.

When the economy starts growing fast a cross-sectoral perspective is needed. The launching yesterday of the Serbian sustainable development strategy is a major achievement in building a commitment from the top of Government and from all sectors and involving the civil society. When economic development is high on the agenda this is crucial. In this context the SEE report on Sustainable production and consumption is very interesting and promising.

The prospects of a future membership of the European union is a major driver. Of course this also will mean an adaptation of EU legislation, a task that requires continuous work on environmental management.

Mr. Chairman, we have experienced a strong commitment from all the countries in the region. That is of course an important prerequisite for success. Now we all have to work to get the results on the ground.

Thank you!