

**Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe",  
Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007**

**Keynote address by H.E. Predrag Nenezic, Minister of Tourism and Environment of  
the Republic of Montenegro<sup>1</sup>**

**on the Item 5b South -East Europe Perspectives**

**Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentleman,**

In the period between the Ministerial conferences "Environment for Europe" in Kiev and Belgrade, the processes in the South-Eastern Europe Region are characterized with intensive changes in all the segments of societies. After the period of political crisis and instability in 1990s, and the initiated big changes that followed within the process of reconstruction and stabilization, which was conducted through establishment of trust between the countries based on the essentially new principles, and through the reform of the overall governance system on the national levels, in the period after the Kiev conference, the accession to EU was clearly recognized as a key goal of all the countries from the South-Eastern Europe Region. Implementation of stabilization and association process to EU, based on meeting the Copenhagen criteria: political and economic criteria and accepting the EU *acquis communautaire*, represents a major drive of the overall reforms on the national and regional level.

Environmental protection as the integral part of EU *acquis communautaire* acceptance is the initiator of changes of national policies in the field of sustainable use and natural resources management, institutional reforms and national institutions capacities strengthening, harmonization of national regulations with European regulations and establishment of the mechanisms needed for their efficient implementation. Having in mind the needs in sense of EU integrations, the issues of environmental protection have become a part of a political dialogue and have been incorporated in foreign policy priorities of the Region. Achieving sustainability of development of the South-Eastern European countries, through the EU membership, became a basic generator of social, economic and the reforms in the field of environmental protection.

Montenegro has directed its efforts, while experiencing intensive changes, to creation of conditions for enhanced economic growth, with recognition of the need for application of principles of sustainable development. As a small system, which can, being such, be reformed in a short period of time, but which is, on the other hand, for being such, more sensitive to negative effects of unilateral decisions, we have been trying hard to build a Montenegrin development model based on continuous efforts to reduce risks to a minimum, due to appearance of possible patterns of unsustainable production, consumption and use of natural resources.

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Facing big inflow of foreign investments, especially in the field of tourism, as a powerful drive of the overall economic reforms, and complementary development of energy sector and transportation, and growing pressures which can endanger acceptance capacities of living environment, especially in the context of intensified use of raw materials, Montenegro has chosen the way on which, based on priorities and goals of sustainable development defined in the National Strategy of Sustainable Development, Euro-Atlantic integrations represent a platform for harmonization of necessary, strong economic development of the society and mobilization of external and domestic sources for construction and continuous strengthening of environmental capacities.

Therefore,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

National priorities in the field of environmental protection in the coming five years will refer to;

- reform of legislation in line with priorities of the stabilization and association process;
- establishment of the efficient instruments for implementation of priority international agreements in the field of environmental protection, such as the agreements on climate changes, protection of bio-diversity, marine eco system, water flows, biological safety, chemicals management, cross-border control of industrial pollution, information accessibility etc. with constant efforts to enable compatibility with the EU Acquis for the purpose of rational use of the administrative capacities;
- remove barrier referring to insufficient administrative capacities through institutional development and establishment of mechanisms for integration of environmental policy into sectoral plans and programmes;
- introduction and application the strategic planning and management instruments, legal, economic, organizational and other instruments which enable preservation and sustainable valuation of unique natural potentials of Montenegro: marine and costal area, mountain regions, national parks and protected areas of nature;
- application of instruments for monitoring and evaluation of living environment condition, which is based on the system of reporting of the European Environmental Agency;
- application of strategic environmental assessment at the event of development and adoption of development strategic documents;
- increase of the environmental investments and development of communal infrastructure as a necessary precondition for sustainable economic valorization of natural potentials;
- governance system reform based on decentralization, participation approach and negotiations of different stakeholders at all levels ;
- strengthening of regions cooperation with paying special attention to strengthening of cross-border cooperation ;

- strengthening of statistical system in the field of environmental protection as a precondition for comparative positioning in regional, European, and global context;
- reinforcing coordination between sectors in order to enable continuous application of the model of integrated environmental management;

In order to conduct all these changes, Montenegrin institutions need assistance and cooperation with international technical and financial institutions. Support of developed countries on bilateral basis, as well as from the countries from the Region in terms of exchange of knowledge and experience, are particularly important. In that sense, UNECE Process Environment for Europe, as well as the Environmental Performance Review, should continue to give contribution to the Region of the South Eastern Europe, so that the national reforms, which need to integrate mechanisms for efficient action on the national level in the context of European integrations and meeting the requirements of priorities on the global level, gave the results which enable integration of the whole Region in the European family. The period of intensive reforms, when political preconditions were fulfilled, represents a space where European institutions, agencies and UN institutions can act in a synergy, so that changes would not lose their continuity and power.

Thus,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are strongly supporting continuation of cooperation in that direction in the coming period, believing that other countries of the Region share our opinion. On this note, I would like to thank you for your attention