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At the outset, allow me Mr. Chairman, to congratulate the Serbian Government for the excellent work that has been done in preparing and organizing such an important event. My delegation would also thank the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the representatives of intergovernmental organizations, NGO representatives and all the participants contributing to the success of this Conference.

Turkey is of the opinion that the Environment for Europe process provides us an important opportunity for dialogue and cooperation not only among the Governments but also with international organizations, NGOs and private sector. Our achievements on protection of environment and sustainable development are closely watched around the world and have inspired others to follow.

In line with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, important responsibility falls upon governments for ensuring environmental sustainability. In this regard, The Ministerial Declaration is another way to express our commitment to achieve a healthy environment for present and future generations.

As indicated in the Declaration, we believe that achievement of this goal mainly depends on closer cooperation among stakeholders involved in the Environment for Europe Process. We sincerely believe that without coordinated action at the global, regional and national level, we can not overcome the challenges of sustainable development.

Turkey, in its geographical capacity as a bridge between regions can play a vital role in promoting increased dialogue and cooperation within the Environment for Europe Process. We believe that initiatives for increased cooperation in the region such as Environmental Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia constitute an important step forward to reach our common goals.

As indicated in the Ministerial Declaration, promotion of good governance, increasing transparency, capacity building for environmental protection, changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and using energy efficient technologies play significant role to achieve sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

The Ministerial Declaration, we adopt here, highlights the new opportunities and challenges to make our decisions practicable and useful for the future.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize once again that utilization of renewable energies in addition to energy efficient technologies are critical for achieving three pillars of sustainable development, namely economic growth, protection of the environment and social welfare. As we all agree on that utilization of energy efficient technologies and renewable energies are significant factors not only for combating climate change and air pollution problem but also for achieving environmental sustainability and fighting poverty.

In this context, in order to fulfill its responsibilities, Turkey has been pursuing policies in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energies.

However, we regretfully express that despite all the efforts and the works carried out in other international fora, the importance of renewable energies has not been addressed the Ministerial Declaration.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I would like to emphasize once again that the challenges regarding the environmental problems can only overcome by the close cooperation among all the stakeholders.

I thank you.