

**Opening Statement by The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at the fourth
Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention.
Bonn, 20-22 November 2006**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address this meeting on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. My Country is not a party to the Convention yet, but since a long time we are working very closely with the Convention and the Secretariat, participating in meetings, seminars and working groups and giving a part of our knowledge and experience as a contribution.

As a Country on the way to European Community, Macedonia is in the process of approximation EU legal framework in all environmental sectors, in the water sector as well. We expect that very soon the New Water Law will be adopted in the Parliament, which will give us the basis for better management of waters at the national and transboundary level and for the implementation of the provision of this Convention.

Dear Participants, we are fully aware that waters cannot be managed at the national level only, but together with our neighbouring countries and in the frame of the regions. In the process of providing better quality of water for all users, good quality of drinking water and for ecosystems we are in the process of establishing a proper monitoring system in the country, to assess the status of water quality and quantity, the main constrains in the sector, as well as the capacities of the responsible institutions to run and maintain necessary activities in that regard.

We started with the Vardar River basin, which covers more than 80 per cent of the water catchment area in Macedonia and at the same time it is a transboundary river basin. In the implementation of this activity, supported by EU, we are learning about the principles for transboundary river management, but also we are learning the good practices that were applied in Ohrid Lake and other lakes and river basins that have been examined under this Convention. We will try to apply all these positive exercises in the other river basins of our Country.

There is a joint commitment in the Country to start with the activities for ratification of the Convention, but it is necessary first to pass the process of assessment of the capacities of the Country for implementation of all requirements which are related to it. In that regard very soon we need an expert assistance by those countries which have good experience in this field to help us to prepare the assessment and find the existing gaps or positive aspects in the sector and help us to facilitate the process of ratification. This assessment will guarantee future better implementation of the Convention.

At the end I would like to wish you successful work in this meeting, hoping that by the next Meeting of the Parties, Macedonia will be a full member of this Convention.

Thank you for the attention.