

Initial inputs of the Government of Montenegro for a Ministerial Declaration to be put forward for the adoption at the UNEA-3

- The Government of Montenegro fully endorses the title of the 2017 United Nations Environment Assembly, which will be “Towards a Pollution Free Planet”. **We commend the initiative put forward by the President of the UN Environment Assembly, H.E. Dr. Edgar Gutierrez-Espeleta, Minister of Environment and Energy of the Republic of Costa Rica to commence a broad and highly inclusive process for developing a Ministerial Declaration as a political statement linked to the theme of the Assembly.** The Government of Montenegro will use relevant international fora to express its commitments to this process, including through participation of H.E. Ambassador Milorad Šćepanović in his capacity of the Vice-President of UNEA-3 at the second Preparatory Retreat for the Environment Assembly to be held in Costa Rica and at the European Ministerial Consultations on the UNEA-3 to be held in Ostrava in June 2017.
- **The Government of Montenegro supports the idea of developing a Ministerial Declaration as a consensual political statement, global in focus and actionable.** The Ministerial Statement should present a political commitment to the environmental dimension of the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and to reducing and eradicating pollution as one of the prerequisite for healthy environment and long-term sustainable economic growth. In the consultation process we, the international community with its relevant stakeholders, should strive to concretize our responses to specific pollution related targets of the 2030 Agenda. The UNEA-3 is a unique opportunity to strengthen the voice of the environment and environmental pillar of sustainable development and to offer widely acceptable flexible and effective solutions. For that reason the commitment of UNEA - 3 to specific global actions to reduce pollution has an utmost importance.
- The Declaration should **recognize a number of challenges in restoring and sustaining pollution free and healthy planet** – primarily by reducing increase of anthropogenic pressures on natural resources and by providing interface of healthy environment and healthy people. It is a tremendous challenge we have to meet while we are trying to apply effective mechanisms to stop the overexploitation of natural resources and to reduce linear dependence of economic growth from natural resources consumption.
- The Ministerial Declaration should **systematize short- and long-term commitments and actions towards achieving depollution**, that could be focused on:
 - The control of pollution at source and continual and comprehensive monitoring of air, water, sea, biodiversity and soil quality with identification of the causal - consequential relations of environmental pressures and their impacts on humans and biodiversity;
 - The improvement of air, water, sea, soil quality, followed with the measures aimed at elimination of threat to forest, habitats, species, water and coastal ecosystems;
 - Reduction of the environmental risks;
 - Protection and sustainable use of marine resources and coastal zone with reduction of main pressures to marine environment;
 - Marine litter management;
 - Sound waste management, safe chemical management and industrial pollution control;
 - The scientific researches in order to deliver reliable data for improving the status of environment and ensuring the efficient pollution control;

- The inclusive growth and the knowledge-based development through a meaningful interface of the scientific researches with the policy and decision making processes;
- The use of specific and multi-disciplinary indicators, primarily the UN sustainable development indicators.
- **The Ministerial Declaration should be built around some of the most relevant SDGs targets:**
 - 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination;
 - 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally;
 - 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management;
 - 12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international framework, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize the adverse impacts on human health and the environment;
 - 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from Land based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.
- The Government of Montenegro perceives the complex topic of depollution as interlinked with the introduction of green economy. Therefore an attention could be drawn to **synergy of achieving pollution-free planet and some of the important steps towards achieving green economy**, at least with the following ones:
 - Move towards carbon neutral development through GHG reduction for 30% until 2030 compared to 1990;
 - Improve resource efficiency in key economic sectors;
 - Improve waste management towards circular economy;
 - Support sustainable valorisation and preservation of marine resources and blue economy;
 - Green the economy by promoting and implementing sustainable consumption and production;
 - Apply social responsibility tools;
 - Increase competitiveness of economy through green jobs.
- Finally, the declaration should shortly recognize **how UNEP and UNEA could support the process of localization and implementation of relevant SDGs, including through regional responses**. As to enforce implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda, the expected UNEA-3 outcome document should have a key importance. The role of the UNEP and UNEA is indispensable in building partnerships within the UN system and of the UN system with relevant international stakeholders, as well as in directing concerted effort to support national stakeholders. For example, UNEP/MAP should continue to play an important role in providing regional forum for exchange of experience, but also to be the key regional fora for delivering on environmental dimension of sustainable development in Mediterranean region thus providing support to depollution of our planet through depollution of Mediterranean Sea. UNEP should make all possible efforts to support national implementation of environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda. All relevant partnerships should be created as to serve to that purpose. Global Environmental Facility potentials should be redesigned as to better fit into priorities of delivering on environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda. However,

we have to be also aware of the needs to create other instruments and tools to support concerted efforts which have to ensure linkages between global initiatives and regional and national responses to the challenges related to depollution of our planet. The declaration could also recognize that the assumption of assumption of delivering on environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda, in addition to political support and good governance model, without doubt, is the financing of sustainable development. It is necessary to adapt the system of financing for sustainable development with the needs to implement SDGs. Namely, in the period up to now key shortcomings were related to the lack of financial instruments that should enable the expansion of the base for financing sustainable development policy.

- **We wish to emphasize that all the above listed priorities take also the central place in the new National Sustainable Development Strategy of Montenegro until 2030. Our new strategy recognizes the protection of natural capital as the key priority theme for sustainability of Montenegrin society. The Government of Montenegro remains at the disposal for further clarifications of the individual points of our initial inputs and look forward to further engage in the consultations process.**