

Your excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is our pleasure to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Environmental Assembly. Even though we are in very complex and challenging times due to the global pandemic, I would like to complement the organizers for organizing this meeting and we hope that in the near future, we will be able to work together in person again.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the five richest countries in terms of biodiversity in Europe. The richness of flora, fauna and fungi, in addition to high level of endemism and relict species, ensures its significance not only on the European but on the global level as well.

As the fundamental international environment protection principle, conservation of biological diversity is considered the most important strategic assignment, common concern and responsibility of all countries in the framework of sustainable development process. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a Party to the UNCBD (as of 2002), follows the global trends in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and, as a result, it has brought together and joined its potentials in actions undertaken within the Aichi Targets framework. Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the development of the Fifth and recently Sixth National Report to the UNCBD is the first cycle of the global strategic planning process that BiH is included in from the very beginning.

Since 2010, we have been collaborating with UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on concrete projects that have been implemented in our country. At the moment, UNEP through a GEF funded project, is assisting governments at all levels with enlargement and effective management of protected areas in the country. I would like to thank UNEP for amazing environmental protection efforts in the country.

I believe we are on the right track to protect nature, to enhance the nature management in the country and I am looking forward to future cooperation with UNEP. This country needs to build back better and to prioritize nature conservation, and only with joint efforts I believe we will be successful!

Thank you and I wish to all of us very productive meeting and work!

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