



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT

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ALBANIA

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Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and special thanks to the UNEP for making this event happen, even in this difficult situation the whole world is facing due to the covid 19.

We know the world is going towards greater energy efficiency. We know the world is going towards lower carbon. We know that the world is moving towards more renewable energy,” Trudeau said. “This is the way the world is going”.

Dear excellencies and distinguished delegates, dear Mr. President, Albania considers the the Assembly meeting as a crucial place to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law, as well as a mechanism that serves as a long-term development platform. By joining our efforts with the global ones, and then with the EU, we can become a potential by offering more and receiving more to reach in a concerted manner our goals and objectives towards reaching out the conservation and protection of the environment as a whole, and also aiming to complete the SDG targets.

Environment, nature and natural resources, waters and air have no borders and that’s why global cooperation is an important component. The cooperation among all of us process has been supported over the last years in the form of environmental cooperation programmes aiming to facilitate the communication and cooperation between the beneficiary countries in addressing transboundary environmental issues while also facilitating the exchange of information, best practices and experience between the beneficiaries.

UNEA brings to the same table all the countries in the point to address the challenges that lay in front of them, and the same time possibility to discuss solutions on how to jointly tackle environmental challenges.

Through a concerted cooperation in line with our obligation towards EU, we aim to promote economic growth and raise living standards by encouraging, regional economic cooperation, through provision of an excellent opportunity to introduce the environmental sustainability dimension into economic and social development in the region.

The adoption, implementation and enforcement of the EU acquis on Environment and towards the global environmental conventions is an obligation for Albania. Reducing the emissions of air pollutants and GHG is of high priority, which is strongly interlinked with energy, transport and health policies, among others. Successful implementation of the EU air quality legislation in

Albania would also help EU neighbouring countries to reach their limit values for some air pollutants.

From all the above, I also would like to point the urgent need to set the basis for a major transformation of our region to turn sustainability and resilience challenges into opportunities and quickly transpose elements of the European Green Deal in all interrelated priority sectors. Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, to which Albania is part as mentioned in the EU Green Deal action plan, is considered to offer great opportunities for the green transition in our region.

Throughout this period the government of Albania is engaged in fulfilling the obligations toward CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD and the other agreements we are party, and EU related reforms and is addressing the key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations. In relation to the environment, the purpose of achieving European environmental standards is not solely based on Albania's EU integration aspirations but above all it relates to the concept of enhancing the quality of life and safety for citizens, community and the future generations by guaranteeing a cleaner and healthier environment.

Our environmental policies and legal framework aim to promote sustainable development and protect the environment for present and future generations. It is based on preventive actions, the polluter pays principle, fighting environmental damage at source, shared responsibility and the integration of environmental protection.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment on behalf of Albanian Government has tried to respond to climate change challenges with concrete policies and programs, as well as by significantly enhancing cooperation with our key development partners and other international donors and institutions by protection of nature and the natural resources, with the main goal to improve the wellbeing of its citizens through better management of waste, air quality, better management of forests.

Albania has taken very important steps towards policy documents and action plans on climate change, involving especially energy and transport sectors, but also agriculture, forestry, waste management, etc.

The Paris Agreement was both a signal and a roadmap: a signal to the world that practices like deforestation and unsustainable energy use cannot continue; and a roadmap towards the ultimate goal of a zero-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable future. Overall, if successfully implemented, the implications of the Paris Agreement for sustainable development will be profound and transformative.

As of July 2nd 2019, the Government of Albania was the first country in the Region with an endorsed **Strategy on Climate Change, and related Action Plans on Mitigation and Adaptation** respectively, representing a general cross-cutting strategy with policy objectives and concrete actions to:

- reduce GHG emissions:
- Become resilient to climate change

Implementation of Paris Agreement and the NDC target are in the core of both National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC) and its Mitigation Action Plan (MAP).

In line with EU efforts on climate change and our respective obligations in the EU accession process, the Law “**Climate Change**” is approved.

On the other hand, the country endorsed the **National Strategy of Energy 2018-2030 (July 2018) as the main energy policy document mainstreaming the climate change**. The new strategic framework is based on two main pillars: (i) the development of reforms to foster market liberalisation and regional integration, and (ii) huge investment on sustainable development driven by participation in the Energy Community initiative and in particular at international level by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Furthermore, the Strategy foresees the preparation of the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, as an engagement of the Republic of Albania at the Ministerial Meeting of the Energy Community, which preparatory work has started to ensure beyond the 2020 national targets and in line with the EU 2030 and 2050 agenda:

Waste - It is a big achievement the approval of the new waste management strategy and action plan since May 2020. The Strategic Policy Document presents the need for a gradual transition from a linear economy to a circular economy, aiming, among else, for a prolonged lifecycle, collection through source separation and large-scale recycling. Transition to circular economy, where waste is seen as a source of material by its return to the economy as raw material, will be profitable for the environment and national economy.

The Action Plan on waste management is prepared for all the Directives and Regulations of the Waste Management sub-chapter of the Acquis, which provide a detailed description of the current situation, the transposition and implementation tasks still to be carried out in the short (2021-2023) and medium term (2024-2027) and an estimate of the human and financial resources needed to carry such tasks.

It provides clear roles and responsibilities of the institutions involved, as well as deadlines for the implementation of directives is prepared.

As circular economy is identified as a priority not only for Albania but for most of the countries all over the world, some projects are ongoing. The main goal of them is strengthening the capacities of local and national authorities in waste management and circular economy and to reduce generated waste through implementing the legislation.

Nature

Albania has faced environmental degradation over the past two decades, due to the development trends that have put its natural resources under significant pressure, impoverishing the country of its value.

- Over-exploitation of natural resources, uncontrolled development, as well as the effects of industrialization and urbanization accompanied by a lack of law enforcement, are presently the main threats to Albania's rich biodiversity.
- Habitat loss and fragmentation as well as damage and degradation of habitats and ecosystems are leading to the loss of both animal and plant species.
- With regards to protected areas while the surface area **has been significantly increasing with 18.5% of the surface of our country**, matters of management lag behind. Albania has progressed quite well with the establishment of the legal and institutional framework for monitoring and reporting on biodiversity and forestry. However, implementation still lags behind due to a lack of funds.

Renewable Energy Policies

- The Albanian government has been focused on the diversification of its supply with energy and the promotion of other renewable energy resources, such as biomass, solar energy and wind energy.
- Law No 7/2017 of 2.02.2017 “On promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources” partially aligned with the Directive 2009/28/EC
- The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP 2018-2020) is adopted on March 28, 2018; Albania’s target for the 2020 is 38% RES share of energy mix consumption rate.
- Albania has a considerable potential of RES. Its solar power potential has been assessed in 1,500-1,700 kWh/m²/year, and has also unexploited potentials of wind power, especially along the Adriatic coastline.
- Currently for the first time a new incentivizing scheme for Solar Photovoltaics and Wind mills has been developed and put in place for smaller plants up to 2 MW for solar and 3 MW for Wind, and starting from 2017 a large number investors has applied.
- An auction scheme for the deployment of larger plants will be put in place. The capacities of these technologies to be supported has more than doubled from the previous National RES action plan to the new 2018-2020 Renewable Action Plan.

Tourism sector - The Albanian economy is aiming for a new economic model which in its essence imposes involvement in the potentials of growth and social cohesion of factors and sectors that make it more productive and more competitive. In the challenges of medium and long-term developments of the Albanian economy, tourism is considered one of the most potential sectors to achieve higher economic growth and with positive effects on increasing employment and real income.

Tourism development will be based on and supported by environmental protection, including natural resources, ecosystems, landscapes, biodiversity, etc. and, in some areas, it will also be supported by the improvement of the existing environment.

Tourism development will ensure the social structures and social welfare of the inhabitants of tourist destinations, of the people working in this business and of the whole society.

Albania is committed towards strengthened action to protect and restore nature and the nature-based solutions to achieve the SDGs in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental).

Thank you