

**Address by H. E. Mrs. Elena Dumitru,  
Secretary of State,  
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, ROMANIA**

**The 65<sup>th</sup> session of the UNECE  
Geneva, 9 April 2013**

*Excellencies,  
Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Executive Secretary,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to represent Romania at the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and to address you today.

The theme of this session, “*Enabling the shift to a sustainable future*”, combines many important subjects we need to consider when we striving to make sustainable development a success.

At present, the Economic Commission for Europe is one of the most successful regional commissions in the UN system and the future work of the UNECE is expected to have a direct, material impact in building a sustainable future for our region.

Regional cooperation is key in addressing issues of a transboundary nature, exchanging information and disseminating good practices and lessons learned. The work we have invested in identifying and developing relevant activities and projects within UNECE proves the great importance we place on cooperation in our region.

In 2012, we had a chance to take stock of the results previously achieved by the UNECE and to reflect on how we can improve the future activities in order to make them even more relevant to us. It has been a lot of work which resulted in meaningful adjustments. We particularly appreciated the focus placed on ways of ensuring result-oriented activities and on identifying the most relevant projects for the ECE region. We live in a difficult time with limited resources available and the need to use them in the most efficient way is more evident than ever for all of us, organizations and member states.

Romania has actively contributed to this process not only in its capacity as vice-chair of the Executive Committee but also as a Member States which greatly benefited from the cooperation and instruments UNECE developed,

sometimes unique ones as is the case of the environmental conventions, Aarhus and Espoo.

Continuing our support to the UNECE is a joint commitment to further strengthen our regional cooperation and we credit the potential of the ECE to play an active part within regional governance.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We've come a long way since the first Earth Summit 20 years ago. Sustainable development is no longer an afterthought but something that matters, as evidenced by the agreement reached at the Rio+20 Conference. The outcome document "The Future We Want" is a sound basis for further work in the ongoing quest for achieving sustainable development, globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The UNECE has to play an important and active role in regionally promoting sustainable development and the implementation of the agreed Rio+20 outcome document.

This document is an opportunity to define future actions in a world of over seven billion, faced with the decline of two thirds of its ecosystems and with the challenges related to delivering growth, prosperity, equality, employment and quality of life. This document is also a significant step in upgrading the UNECE activity, since our economic, social and environmental security, our future and well-being, relies on the tangible outcomes of Rio+20.

The follow-up process must ensure the full and active participation of all stakeholders.

As agreed in Rio, we are committed to pursuing a just global transition to an inclusive green economy together with our international partners as a tool for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication.

We support the development by the UNECE of international standards and voluntary initiatives for business and industry such as corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability reporting.

We strongly support the UN Secretary General's Sustainable Energy for All by 2030 initiative, launched at Rio+20, since we would like to see action on sustainable energy for all as fundamental to growth and prosperity, while understanding that a quarter of the world's population cannot afford this.

We welcome UNECE's valuable work especially with respect to paragraph 66 of the Rio outcome document focusing on supporting those interested in taking advantage of green economy tools and practices.

We are committed to working with the UNECE to set actions and initiatives to move forward, build bridges, engage countries and civil society from the region, build stronger alliances at regional and international level.

### *Excellencies,*

There is no incompatibility between environmental concerns and delivering growth. Being green is integral to sustainable economic growth and the failure to protect our natural resources makes long term economic growth impossible.

Governments should provide the framework for green growth, through standards and voluntary approaches and through a good management of natural resources, and by developing indicators.

Innovation can support the transition towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and eco-innovation can help economy to adapt to environmental and resource constraints, in order to regain competitiveness and to contribute to the creation of new jobs.

Private sector and civil society have a major role to play through investment, campaigns, evidence, and implementation. We must work together with them to seek out new opportunities, products and innovation, investment and markets. It is also essential to focus on specific regional and global challenges. Energy, water, transports, management of land and forests, are all fundamental to our economy and to the livelihoods of many of the world's poorest people.

We need to produce goods without further damaging our environment. We need sustainable development taking into account the available water resources, the need to reduce waste, and to be climate smart. Access to safe and clean drinking water is one of the basic requirements for development, a prerequisite for green growth and essential to food security and energy.

As proof of our commitment to balance environmental responsibility and economic security, Romania has organised the 11<sup>th</sup> COP to the Ramsar Convention in July 2012.

In a world expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, the implementation of sustainable development is a major challenge, especially considering current consumption and production trends, with their implications for food security, natural resources use, consumption of energy and waste generation. Consumption and production patterns must change in order to decouple

human development and economic growth from escalating resources use and environmental degradation.

One of the most concrete outcomes of Rio+20 is the adopted 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, a global framework to enhance international cooperation, in both developed and developing countries, offering methodologies and tools to facilitate fundamental changes in order to achieve sustainable development.

Significant progress has been made by the Secretariat, hosted by UNEP towards its implementation. We are honored by the fact that together with Russia, Romania is a member of the 10YFP Board for the Eastern European Group.

For Romania, SCP is a global, regional and national priority. The programmes should encourage the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, using a mix of policy instruments and setting clear objective, activities and indicators. We are looking forward to an exemplary engagement by Europe, to achieve sustainable development, in line with the Rio+20 message: sustainable development without environmental and social improvements is unsustainable.

*Mr. Chairperson,*

Regarding UNECE's contribution to the SDG process, we need to bring together work on MDGs and SDGs, to develop an overarching framework aimed at sustainable development and poverty eradication.

We must work towards a clear position beyond 2015 –building on the existing MDGs and establishing SDGs which we will be pushing for a clear commitment to sustainable development and green growth from politicians around the region. We need to make clear that long term, sustainable growth can only be achieved with efficient use of resources, the reduction of emissions, and the eradication of poverty.

We need renewed focus to drive change forward which is why Romania will call for Sustainable Development Goals to drive regional action on linked challenges such as water security and access to energy – as an absolute priority.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We have briefly touched on what is important to us, but we wish to underline the fact that Romania wants a UNECE that can react swiftly and efficiently to the needs of all its Member States. We are therefore looking forward to a sustained dialogue on these issues.

In conclusion, Romania fully intends to engage in constructive and fruitful contribution and will do its utmost to ensure an ambitious and forward-looking outcome of this 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission.

Thank you.