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Thematic Session

Thursday, 14 September, 2017, at 10.00 a.m.

Hotel Splendid, Budva

Minister Radulovic, Your Excellences, representatives of Parties to the Convention, EU, NGOs, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion at this the Sixth Meeting of Parties of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol. I would like to welcome all participants to Montenegro in my role as Resident Coordinator and use this opportunity to add my voice to those stressing the value this and other conventions will have in contributing to global efforts to implement Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals it incorporates.

I would like to congratulate Government of Montenegro for hosting this international Conference, and acknowledge the efforts and the role of the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism in its organisation and my operations staff in UNDP in supporting them.

There are two themes in the Budva Declaration where UNDP seeks to support countries. Firstly, in promoting related to environmental matters *“access to information, public participation and access to justice to increase transparency and accountability”*

I would like to highlight the work done in the process leading up to finalization of Agenda 2030 in September 2016. 10 million people, across the globe, spoke up and told the UN the issues and values they saw as important in defining “the future we want”. In Montenegro, 2% of population, or 12,000 people took part in a countrywide consultation process. Eight priorities emerged including ‘The Environment’ and ‘Values and Anti-corruption’. The findings from these consultations globally were negotiated through the political structures of the UN and came together in the formulation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP worldwide anchored this public participation process.

The Budva Declaration also notes the importance of mainstreaming approaches to sustainable development such as a transition to the green economy which encourages resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production.

UNDP’s strategy for Montenegro until 2021 is aligned with and highly supportive of the green economy agenda. And we are not starting from the scratch! On the contrary, a lot of efforts have already been made to

mainstream green economy, support green ideas and solutions and showcase good green economy practices. Joint projects have generated tangible results in areas such as CO₂ emission reduction, energy efficiency, remediation of polluted sites, sustainable tourism development, protection of ecosystems and creation of green jobs. Some \$ 20 million has been mobilized over the past ten years for (completed and on-going) projects in these areas of intervention.

At a regional level, UNDP is pleased to be part of the Environmental Security Initiative establishing and strengthening capacities of Aarhus Centres in areas such as Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change.

All of us – governments, businesses, civil society, scientists – will have to work together to make the change and bring reality to the goals we aspire to in Agenda 2030. This may not be easy at times. But, ensuring a role for all stakeholders in the process is critical and essential if we are to develop more transparent, accountable and inclusive governance structures in line with the ambitious targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16.