

Chair,

Minister Radulovic, (Minister for Sustainable Development and Tourism)

Colleagues and fellow delegates,

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to deliver this brief intervention on the occasion of the joint high level segment of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol, to stress Romania's commitment to continue to fully implement its obligations under the two international instruments.

I begin by using this opportunity to thank our gracious host, the Government of Montenegro, for their warm hospitality and wise leadership. I am glad that following the example of its neighbor, Croatia, who played a very important role in developing, in 2004 at Cavtat, the Espoo Convention, Montenegro has chosen to lead the UNECE countries in further developing the Aarhus Convention.

Since beginning this second mandate as Minister of Environment of Romania, I have made, in accordance with the Romanian Government Program, the improvement of the access to information, and public participation in decision-making in environmental matters a priority of my work within the Ministry. Naturally, the Convention and the Protocol are essential in our efforts.

We acknowledge that the Convention, together with the Espoo Convention, are key elements in promoting environmental democracy. They play an essential role in bringing the civil society, the local communities, as well as the individual citizens closer to decisions that could impact them directly. Their participation improves decisions, and facilitates their implementation.

Through the tireless work of the Compliance Committee and of the other bodies of the Convention, for which we are very grateful, the Convention has become a sophisticated instrument. Sometimes, authorities other than environment authorities, are finding it difficult to understand this development.

For this reason, we realized that we need to do more in order to train other public authorities in the implementation of the Convention. Naturally, the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol is work in progress, which require constant guidance. With the help of the useful documentation developed under the Convention, we have already started to develop materials necessary for an improved training of public officials from all areas.

According to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (Rio Declaration 1992), in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development, environmental protection will be an integral part of the development process and cannot be addressed

independently.

Therefore, protecting the environment and, in particular, preventing environmental pollution is one of the main policies to be promoted and applied by all governments and organizations.

"Environment" is a horizontal component that needs to be mainstreamed in all areas of development.

One of the mechanisms of knowledge and prevention of pollution is represented by the "implementation" reports of the environmental legislation elaborated by the Member States.

One of these mechanisms is the PRTR that presents, evaluates and informs institutions, organizations and the general public on the level of emissions of pollutants emitted and transferred to the environment.

Sustainable development is a complex approach involving multiple interconnected mechanisms, including the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, mechanisms that as a whole lead to the prevention of environmental pollution.

Only by strengthening the compliance with the international norms, we can increase our level of ambition and actively use this instrument in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The process, as we see it, puts the environmental authorities at the core of a dense network of efforts to ensure that the cross-cutting nature of the Convention and the Protocol is put to good use in the implementation of these Goals.

Thank you for your attention.