

## **Joint High-Level Segment**

### **under the Meetings of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs**

14 September 2017, Budva, Montenegro

#### **Statement of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic to the Budva Declaration (Item 4)**

Honourable ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Aarhus friends,

I am very delighted to address you today from the beautiful city of Budva and I would like to convey the very best greetings from the Government of the Slovak Republic to the government and people of Montenegro.

I am also honored and privileged to participate in this historical event during which the Budva Declaration will be adopted and I would like to thank the Aarhus Secretariat and the Government of Montenegro for their tremendous effort and in preparing this event.

Slovakia highly appreciates the work and activities carried out over last years in the field of Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs and we share the same principles.

We as representatives of the governments as well as representatives of the professional and public community meet here today to look back and evaluate to what extent we have managed to transform our efforts and objectives into practice and equally to set ambitious but realistic goals for the future in Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs. Promotion of democracy, the rule of law in environmental matters, helping to strengthen the involvement of civil society and individuals in decision-making, implementing commitments on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice regarding a wide range of issues that affect environment - these are just some examples of areas where our efforts must be strengthened and effective arrangements should be accelerated.

Budva Declaration in this context, as a declaratory instrument should play a vital role in promoting environmental democracy throughout the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs provide solid frameworks to assist countries in achieving the 2030 Development

Sustainable Development Goals must be a permanent part of societal life, regardless of political changes. It must be widely implemented though we recognize difficulties for countries affected

by disasters and conflicts. This is very true for both - well advanced and wealthier economies and for less developed and the slow growing ones. Of course, national goals and priorities may differ, but ultimate goal remains the same - ensure decent quality of life in harmony with nature and environment. It is equally important to integrate this practice into educational systems and public awareness campaigns as well.

In order to meet future Aarhus Convention 's challenges we definitely need to enhance and strengthen cooperation at a regional and international level while promoting environmental democracy and well-being. With adoption of the Budva Declaration we symbolically open door for better and sustainable future

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me express my firm belief that today's meeting will create necessary momentum for effective multilateral and mutually beneficial cooperation between all parties and stakeholders concerned.

In this spirit, I wish the Budva Declaration a great success!

Thank you!