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“RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY” REGIONAL CONFERENCE

*Esteemed Minister, President of the Academy,
Esteemed experts and guests,*

It is my pleasure to salute you on behalf of the Office for Sustainable Development, and to thank you for a great turn-out at this conference, dedicated to the key issue of sustainable development of Montenegro as well as Central Europe – the issue of energetics and the various ways of implementing renewable energy sources.

Bearing in mind the importance of energetics for Montenegro’s economy and trade balance, as well as the negative effects that this industry has had on the environment and climate changes up to date, developing the energy sector in accordance with principles of sustainable development in all aspects of society and industry represents a fundamental condition for the overall achievement of standards and principles of sustainable development in Montenegro.

This strategic decision is completely in accordance with Montenegro’s twenty-year-long commitment to develop as an ecological state, and also with political, institutional and financial efforts vested into building a sustainable development system in Montenegro, beginning with the second World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and continuing until the present day.

Montenegro can boast to be the first country in the Western Balkans to found a *National council for sustainable development* which plays an advisory role to the Government in the area of sustainable development, and considers long-term national policies from the aspect of their integrated approach and consideration of sustainable development principles. The *Strategy for developing energetics up to 2025* and the accompanying *Action plan* have been under consideration by the Council and its focus groups comprising representatives from all social structures, before being passed by the Government. *The Office for Sustainable Development*, which I represent today, was founded as a secretariat to the Council, but also a coordinating body within the Government of Montenegro, with the mandate to se-

cure a holistic approach in the investigation of national development perspectives. The Office functions as the second link in the national system of sustainable development.

The third element of this system is the *National sustainable development strategy of Montenegro*, an all-encompassing document for long-term strategic planning and development in Montenegro, and the foundation of all other sector policies. In the field of energetics, the *priority tasks* identified by the National strategy are:

1. The rational use of electricity with a minimal 10% increase in energy efficiency in 2015 as compared to 2005
2. Reducing energy import dependence through the optimal use of available national resources and by placing priority on utilizing renewable energy sources

As you have already heard, Montenegro has taken significant steps in implementing different programs and activities in the field of energetics, both in the domain of energy efficiency as well as in promoting renewable energy sources. Achieving sustainable development in practice rests on finding a balance: fulfilling the economic and social capacities of a society, while completely respecting and integrating principles of environmental protection into all development policies and activities. Only when the requirements of all these three constituent parts have been met can each individual society count on a continued growth and long-term development. Therefore, the question of the development and future of the energy sector has to be pondered holistically, keeping in mind the economic, environmental and social contexts.

From the aspect of sustainable development, the main challenges facing Montenegro in the field of energetics are:

- A negative trade balance,
- One of the highest rates of energy consumption in Europe and
- Outdated technologies in industrial and energy production facilities, a cause of great environmental strains which turns the energy sector into the main source of anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gasses.

This state of affairs points out the significant space for implementing measures of energy efficiency so as to *decrease* or *maximize energy consumption* on a national level. Furthermore, bearing in mind the existing national geoclimatic characteristics, stimulating *the use of renewable energy sources at the level of small and medium-sized enterprises and households* represents a chance for development, both with regards to *solving the problem of foreign energy dependency*, as well as the *decrease of internal regional differences*, which has been confirmed by strategic entries in the *Regional development strategy of Montenegro* adopted in July of this year. I would like to place a particular emphasis on the significance of implementing a *standard for energy efficient building* as one of the most effective means of introducing the idea of sustainable energy production and consumption to every individual, thereby contributing to a *complete eradication of unsustainable consumption trends*.

Certainly, the key for finding a balance between the three areas of sustainable development in the field of energetics lies in the *diversification of the national en-*

ergy portfolio, specifically, a successful blending of more intensive means of energy efficiency with an increased utilization of different sources of renewable energy: solar, wind, hydro-power energy and biomass, the last of which meets very favorable conditions in Montenegro.

I am also certain that the practical knowledge needed for achieving this delicate balance lies within a regional cooperation – it can be found through the exchange of experiences and practices regarding the best and most applicable new, clean and energy efficient technologies, as well as by jointly undertaking specific projects. For precisely these reasons, it was my great honor to speak before you today, on behalf of the Office, the Ministry of economy and our host – the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, and in light of our country’s chairing role in the CEI initiative.

I wish you a successful working day and plenty of ideas for joint regional projects that we could implement in the future.

