

## **PAM 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session Tirana, Albania, 18 February 2016**

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Lefter Koka, Minister of Environment of Albania***

Distinguished Mr. Chairman of the Standing Committee of PAM,  
Distinguished Mr. Deputy Chairman of your Committee for Social Affairs,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my highest esteem for organizing this 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of PAM. I want to express my special pleasure that environment, an important component of the developing of the region has been given room in this agenda, a component that becomes even more important with climatic changes. Environment is becoming a matter of greater importance in the world agenda.

Focusing on the Mediterranean I want to draw your attention to the fact that Mediterranean today is considered a hot spot of climate change and natural disasters. Floods, droughts or lack of water, environmental threats to bio diversity, natural resources, health are a real challenge to the region where we live.

In this context Albania as part of the region is one of the countries that is mostly affected by climate change. From 2010 today Albania was hit several times by floods in the northern part and in its southern part. In economic terms losses from floods in the last 6 years are worth tens of millions of Euro, a very high cost for the budget of the country.

The impact of the climate change will vary in various sectors, threatening the safety of food and degrade lands, especially in terms of erosion. It will also affect human health through the spread of diseases, threaten bio diversity and destroy different types, species of flora and fauna.

In this regard the Albanian government has been very proactive in its stand to fulfill some of its obligations standing from international conventions and agreements to which our country is a party, aligning our stance with those of EU.

Even though Albania is a country with decarbonized economy, it contributed to the global agreement. We committed to ensure 11% of the hot house emissions. For Albania most of the measures identified are measures directly linked to the efficient use of energy, the sector of construction and industrial processes. Application of renewable energy through introduction of fuels to the tune of 10% in transport and replacement of fuels with natural gas in various sectors, transport and others.

I have the pleasure, dear participants, to share with you some of the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Environment to reach tangible results in our actions from the international level.

As EU candidate country in the context of our commitment standing from the Energy Community and reduction of hothouse, greenhouse effect. We are working to approximate our legislation on environment, climate change and energy closer to that of EU.

Our recent achievements are linked with the approval of laws on energy efficiency, renewable energy and we are in the process of adoption of the law on bio fuels, the law on efficiency in house hold.

In the mean time the Ministry of Environment, with the support of donors, has undertaken great steps to draft some important strategic documents on climate change and quality of air and environment, just to single out some of them:

- the strategy on climate change,
- the plan to reduce the green house gases,
- national plan on climate change,
- national plan on quality of air,
- draft law on climate change where I have to stress that this is the first time to introduce such law in our legal framework.

For the first time in Albania we are talking now of a national plan of adjustment, which is a new thing even for the EU member countries. We have been successful in drafting 10 action plans for flood management.

In close cooperation with our important partners like EU, World Bank, UNDP, GIZ and other international donors, the Albanian government has initiated projects on adjustment to climate changing, river deltas and other measures focusing on energy, agriculture. We have followed this method also regarding the eco system.

The new policies to protect nature, forests prevent pollution, urban planning, strengthening of the law enforcement are some of the main achievements of our Ministry in the last years.

We are all aware of the extraordinary importance of sustainable development of forests and socio-economic development that they can bring about.

We are aware of the role that forests play in reducing climate change, protection of basins, food safety, minimization of erosion, and filling of dykes, prolonging the life of hydro power stations which generate energy for our economy.

Based on the importance of this sector in Albania and the great in heritage over five decades two weeks ago the parliament endorsed our initiative to impose a 10 years moratorium on

cutting of forests. We will make investments to rehabilitate degraded forests to make up for the harm caused to the forests.

We would like to share some achievements in another important sector, like the protected areas. I am happy to point out that Albania is reaching European standards, where we have to use European style management of these territories.

The document of Strategic Policy on Protection of Bio Diversity for 2016-2020 provides the list of protected areas in the country and extension of the national management of national resources. The path we have embarked on will contribute to the enhancement of the protective coastal and non coastal areas by 6% bio diversity accounting for 17% of the territory.

Albania adheres to Barcelona convention and its protocols and together with the action plan for the Mediterranean are part of the regional sea programs. The objectives of Barcelona convention on the assessment and control of marine pollution through prevention reduction and as much as possible elimination of pollution with a final goal of improving the quality of life are objectives for our country as well.

A session is going to be held in Tirana to minimize pollution in the coastal zones of the Mediterranean from land resources, which will be valid for the period 2016-2025.

The Albanian Government is drafting a cross-sector coastal plan which aims at ensuring strategic development of various sectors and planning and development of the territory.

The investment of the government have focused on two directions that have direct impact on the environment and in Mediterranean like the sewage, waters and the solid waste, mainly in the coastal areas.

Investments in projects related to industrial waste will contribute to the protection of the Ionian and the Adriatic Sea.

Waste management is another objective for the Albanian government to promote and protect sustainable environment. In this context, our Ministry has completed the approximation of the legal framework, in order to protect human life and the quality of life. We have an action plan, one of the main priorities for our ministry being implementation of the new technologies for waste management, all in the areas that have contacts with rivers and the sea, which have a direct impact on the Mediterranean.

Transposition of the EU directives in our legislation, implementation and strengthening of law enforcement, establishment of good cooperation among institutions will make possible to fulfill the objectives we have set ourselves by 2025.

Distinguished participants,

I am sure that by next year we will mark progress in the environmental sector. I want to ensure you that the Albanian government is committed in its work to realize its objectives to ensure sustainable development and protection of environment, both on the national and regional level.

I wish your 10<sup>th</sup> session success.

Thank you.