

Statement by H.E. Ekaterine GRIGALAVA, Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of GEORGIA at the UN Climate Change Conference ‘COP23’, Bonn

Excellences,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Georgia, allow me to express my gratitude to our host, the Fijian Presidency and the Government of Germany for providing a generous support to the small island developing country to host the 23rd meeting of Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC for the first time in history. Indeed, this presidency defines the importance of taking urgent action to combat climate change. This year’s tragic events, related to the natural disasters, forcing Antigua and Barbuda to declare Barbuda as uninhabitable island, does strike us all with thoughts that more action is needed on the ground to build stronger resilience ensuring that no nation has to face similar challenges in the future.

Georgia has ratified the Paris Agreement this year that entered into force for the country on the 7th of June. With this decision the country expressed its high commitment towards the establishment of a new and robust multilateral system that builds on the experience and decades of work of the experts, scientists and policy makers. Joining the Paris Agreement is a significant step towards the establishment of a national legal framework that enables mitigation and adaptation actions on national, regional and local level. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Georgia will soon adopt the Energy Efficiency Action Plan and has already initiated working on the Renewable Energy Action Plan. The country is committed to take significant steps in agricultural sector, building on the principles of climate smart agriculture and resilient crop production. The country is facing challenges in ensuring both,

energy and food security, and hence, investing and taking action within these sectors is indeed a step that would also serve the country in achieving its sustainable development goals. Georgia has received Readiness support program from the Green Climate Fund, which delivers on the elaboration of a country program as well as on the support in the process of the accreditation of the national agency. This will provide the country with the opportunity to design projects that would entail transformational change and of the quality to receive a financial support from the GCF. On the local level the Covenant of Mayors has become a significant tool to stimulate the local action. We have witnessed the major cities transforming their public fleet into more sustainable vehicles such as CNG or electric busses. The new roads provide space for cycling and new measures are taken to encourage purchasing of hybrid and electric cars. The metro line has also been extended and promoted as a sustainable mode of transportation.

As with regards to the other international efforts, Georgia has started its internal procedures to finalize the ratification of Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol as well as the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. The country also envisages the elaboration of a long term low carbon development strategy for 2050 in the near future.

And we are deeply honored and pleased to have acceded to membership in the Environmental Integrity Group within the UNFCCC. We sincerely thank each member Party in the EIG for placing their faith in our progressive principles, contributions, and perspectives. We look forward to contributing great value to the EIG for many years to come, and using this new partnership to increase our effectiveness in promoting an ambitious approach to climate action as we move forward.

We all are aware that the upcoming year will be of a great significance as we need to progress on the Paris Work Program and ensure that the Talanoa Dialogue delivers the right messages to the global society. Additionally, the Parties will have to work hard to advance on the Robust Implementation Guidelines and we strongly support the vision that we need to move beyond statements, as the time is very limited and we don't want to lose the global momentum established at COP21 in Paris.

This year we have all witnessed disastrous events across the globe, Georgia itself suffered from unprecedented forest fires, forests that are home for the endemic species typical only to this region. This not only has threatened our main carbon stock but also the whole ecosystem and biodiversity. This highlights, that the climate change has a huge influence on each and every sector, resulting in a negative chain reaction and in the end, impacting the most vulnerable in the first place. With this in mind, I would like to wish you all a successful negotiation process and express my confidence that with the Fijian Presidency, that aims to ensure inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue building on empathy and decision making on collective good, will be able to effectively direct us towards our deliverables for this year and set a clear pathway how to progress in the upcoming years towards the targets of the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 .

I thank you.