



**Statement delivered by Ms. Marta Szigeti Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), on the occasion of COP22, Marrakech, November 17, 2016**

**Co-chair(s), Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Morocco and the City of Marrakech for hosting this conference.

The Regional Environmental Center welcomes the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. We are all aware that current pledges, in the form of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), have to be ratcheted up to meet the Paris goals. In the words of our chair, H.E. Jari Villen, “we believe that global efforts will not end here, and technology will also develop quickly”. So there is a good chance of meeting the ambitious goals.

Climate action is an integral part of the UN 2030 Agenda, so we must explore synergies among goals, actions and stakeholders. We need to understand what are the key priorities and what instruments need to be put into place, and we need to keep it simple.

The crucial, growing role of non-state actors in relation to climate and the 2030 Agenda is becoming increasingly evident, and the process is unstoppable.

Climate adaptation action needs to be strengthened at local and sectoral level, in particular facilitating science–policy–practice collaboration in order to reduce the knowledge gap.

The REC was founded over 25 years ago to accelerate action by empowering non-state actors, civil society and stakeholder partnerships in our regions. Thanks to the support of the European Commission, the Governments of Sweden, Norway, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan and the USA, and many others, we are building regional cooperation and mainstreaming climate action into sectoral policies.

The REC is active in the fields of climate and security, sustainable resource use, low-emission development, and resilience and adaptation to climate change, thus supporting the development and implementation of NDCs.

While the Marrakech Climate Summit is being called the COP of Action, we stress the importance of empowering all citizens as drivers of change. Climate action should start with Action for Climate Empowerment, formerly Article 6 of the UNFCCC, and with Article 12 of the Paris Agreement “to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information” in order to build a better future for generations to come.

Thank you Marrakech! Let’s continue to target **Results, Empower** stakeholders and accelerate **Change!**