

CLIMATE SUMMIT
High Level segment (1-2 December)

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates,

I am truly honored to be part of this important dialogue, where leaders from around the world gather to discuss and strategize on this important topic.

Montenegro is actively pursuing climate change policy both nationally and internationally, as one of the 197 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which it has been a party since 2006. Even though our national greenhouse gas emissions account for only 0.009% of global emissions, we remain strongly committed to managing our development potentials in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Montenegro has made a number of steps to consolidate its institutional environmental framework. Efforts to introduce elements of sustainable policies into the national framework have been clearly evident in our country since the adoption of the Declaration on the ecological state of Montenegro in 1991, as well as its integration into our Constitution in 1992. With this work, Montenegro became the very first country constitutionally recognized as ecological, with the task to transcend this idea into all policies created at the national level.

Therefore, it is perhaps even the right thing to say that we were international pioneers in the environmental protection initiatives.

Through the vision and words from the Letter of the esteemed President-Designate for COP28, I would like to emphasize Montenegro's progress in delivering this comprehensive transformation:

First – on Transforming climate finance by setting the framework for a new deal on finance

Montenegro is the regional frontrunner when it comes to innovative mechanisms for funding sustainable development. By being the first country to establish SDG Acceleration Fund, we did not only create an adequate financial mechanism, but a truly powerful vehicle to forge joint partnerships which represent a new generation of financing directed to speed up fulfillment of the SDG goals.

The Fund makes Montenegro among the biggest SDG donor states in comparison to its size. The unique character of the Fund is shown also through the institutional partnership with the private sector where the latter is included in financing for the SDG goals, thus leveraging on optimal use of the public money.

And together with the existing ECO Fund, this platform provides a unique support to Montenegro to succeed on fulfilling its national commitments towards the 2030 SDG agenda and help accelerate the country's journey towards the European Union.

Second – on Fast-tracking the energy transition and slashing emissions before 2030

Montenegro has over the past years been undertaking bold actions to strengthen energy efficiency and optimize its energy mix. Large scale energy efficiency programs have been launched, particularly through major investments into the energy efficiency of the public buildings, with the support of the international financial organisations.

Now, the aim is also to gradually reduce the use of fossil fuels in energy production and consumption, while at the same time pursuing socio-economic measures aimed to minimize energy poverty risks.

Also, the country has made a sizeable step forward with regards to the development of the renewable energy production facilities, some of which, especially the wind plants, have been supported by the biggest international companies present in this area. In order to develop this sector further and achieve the 50% share target of renewable sources in gross final consumption until 2030, Montenegro has been actively working on the improvement of the legislation framework hoping to foster major investments in renewables and energy efficiency.

Furthermore, Montenegro has boosted its commitment for the reduction of the greenhouse emissions. Thus, instead of the previously planned reduction by 35%, the country is now committed to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 in comparison to the levels of 1990. This is in accordance with the assumed obligation from our EU accession as per the Energy Community decision from December 2022.

While achieving the climate neutrality goal, Montenegro is committed to fair and just transition. Therefore, our country started the process of developing a Just Transition Roadmap, which should be finalized by the end of this year and will encompass some strategic objectives such as re-skilling of the labour force, education and economic diversification.

And as the just transition is about people, this leads me to a third goal which is:

- Putting nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action

Montenegro currently has 13.2% of protected land area, out of which 7.7% are national parks. In 2021, our country declared the first marine protected area, which was followed by two more. Great efforts are being put in declaring new and enlarging existing special protected areas in our coastal region. Since 2016, Montenegro has been continuously working on habitat and species mapping in order to define the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. And by the end of 2022, about 50% of the territory has been mapped.

Although its constitutional designation expresses commitment to the environment, natural and cultural resources, it is fair to admit that Montenegro during the previous decades did not do enough to fully reflect that image. Inadequate space planning, waste and water waste management, are some of the major challenges. Thus the country is committed to a better compliance and good-governance, as well as implementation of innovative solutions and investments in the area of environmental protection.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the light of all the environmental, energy and economic crises the world has encountered and whose repetition is certain, we must not allow powerlessness to prevail. We should focus even more on long-term sustainable development.

On this path, it is crucially important to bring together all relevant social actors, because only in this way we can pursue our joint sustainable future. And we must be aware that knowledge represents the best bridge for building partnerships.

Bearing in mind that the link between sustainable development and knowledge is inseparable, Montenegro continues to strengthen it by building on intellectual and academic capacities of our Universities through multidisciplinary programs for sustainable development and through many others platforms, like the Innovation Fund and the Science and Technology Park.

Finally, in light of the growing need to preserve our resources, perhaps the best advice is to find inspiration and solutions in them. Returning to nature, with a wise disposal of what it selflessly gives us, is the only way ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Montenegro is committed to a better future which is green and sustainable.

Thank you.