

Dear Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Mr Hong Ha,

Dear GEF CEO Ms Ishii,

Dear Chairman and GEF Secretary,

Dear Presidents,

Dear Ministers,

Representatives of Diplomatic Missions,

Dear participants from different parts of the World,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to initially express my countries' and my personal gratitude, to the country of Vietnam, the host of this meeting, which has involved Kosovo in the 6th GEF Assembly and has given us the opportunity of being hand-in-hand and equal to the other participating countries. And, please, allow me to thank you for making me feel so welcome. We share common values, and at the same time, common opportunities.

We also appreciate highly the invitation of the Global Environment Facility Secretariat for allowing Kosovo to participate in this Assembly, since, as you all might be aware, my country is not yet a member of the United Nations Organization and that it is neither a signatory nor a party to any of the UN Conventions, especially in the Environmental sector.

The involvement of Kosovo in this Assembly rounds up our work, in helping us improve the state of the environment, our common concern, and at the same time, engages us in the framework of initiating the European Integration process, in undertaking concrete steps, in meeting the standards.

Jointly, we may show how much we can achieve in preserving and improving the environment. The World is our common wealth and, only together, can we make it better and richer!

I wish to share with you some of the commitments that my country is making in the field of the environment:

Kosovo is a small country in South-Eastern Europe, with a bitter legacy of a war, which has left consequences, not only to its people, but, also to its environment. For years, we have been committed to creating a good legal and program framework, harmonized with the European Union legislation and international norms and standards. A

particular importance has been given in improving waste management, water management, biodiversity conservation, air protection from pollution, climate change adaptation, mitigation and climate change impacts and the implementation of clean and eco-innovative technologies.

We have achieved good results by changing our environment and by preserving our natural assets that have been damaged by the difficult past. We have obstacles, difficulties, and challenges in the implementation of environmental policy standards. But we have not stopped. In this important battle for the environment, the land and our resources, in general, need support.

We had the European Union on this journey with us, in which we expect to become a natural part of, in the near future, through various instruments and programs, although for a huge and important work, we also need support from programs and instruments and the United Nations funds.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is one of these programs from which we expect support in implementing projects.

I would like to emphasize here that GEF, in different and indirect ways, has included Kosovo in various projects, such as: the project "Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Resource Management in the Extended Drin River Basin," which is being implemented through the Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med), involving Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, and Kosovo.

Regardless of the beliefs of any of you on my country's independence, which has been recognized by 116 UN member states, a large number of international organizations and important world institutions, each of your support and the support of the United Nations, is necessary for our country to achieve the common goal - for a better and more advanced world.

The Environment of Kosovo is part of this World.

I take the opportunity, once again, to present the request of Kosovo, in having access to GEF's funds and programs and to be a participant in all activities that are organized within GEF. Simultaneously, to benefit from this program through the implementation of concrete projects.

Make us an inseparable and equal part of the common world!

We also see a good opportunity in cooperating with the regional countries for the realization of joint projects and programs through the GEF support, in exchange of experiences and practices.

Allow me to express my gratitude, once again, for this opportunity of the participation of Kosovo in this Assembly and for dealing with such serious issues of ours.

Nature does not need people. People need nature. Therefore, let us all come together; work together, for a cleaner environment, a healthier life for us, our children, and the next generations to come.

Thank you!