



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Second Committee  
Agenda Item 54: Sustainable Development

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STATEMENT  
by  
H.E. Mr. Jovan Mirilovic,  
Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister

New York, 30 October 2007

Madam Chairperson,

Since this is the first time that I take the floor in the Second Committee, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Second Committee. I would also like to convey my congratulations to all members of the Bureau and wish them every success in their work.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement of Portugal on behalf of European Union, so I will restrict myself to the priorities of my delegation.

At the beginning of my statement, let me say a few words about the results of the recently concluded sixth Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe*, held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007. In addition to the Ministers of the Environment of the participating States, the process included for the first time the Ministers of Education in order to emphasize the importance of education in this field. As reflected in the JPOI of the WSSD, the improvement of education for sustainable development is an important goal for all governments and my country welcomes their efforts to meet the objectives of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Conference noted the problems facing the pan-European region and recommended the steps for the way forward.

Air pollution in the UNECE region is still very high and is one of the major factors of a shorter average life expectancy in the countries of the region by almost one year. More than 100 million people still do not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Notwithstanding energy efficiency improvements and an increased use of renewable resources, energy consumption and the resulting greenhouse emissions have increased, while the decline of biodiversity and the loss of ecosystem continue.

These trends are a cause of genuine concern, as well as a reason behind the Ministers' call for urgent action. They called, *inter alia*, for further improvements of indicator-based environmental assessments and the reporting in the region. Likewise, the UNECE members pledged to pay special attention to strengthening environmental institutions and organizations, policy instruments and their implementation and capacity building. The Ministers went on to confirm the importance of the establishment of a Sub-regional Centre for Climate Change Monitoring in Belgrade and expressed their firm commitment to cooperate with other regions by providing leadership and sharing lessons learned and experience gained.

Madam Chairperson,

The fifteenth meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development confirmed the practical importance of this body. A variety of side events, Learning Centre courses and Partnership Fair activities enriched the Commission's activities. It is regrettable, though, that the Commission did not reach agreement on several important issues, in particular on an international agreement on energy efficiency. We hope that the

positions of the negotiating groups will become more flexible at the next meeting, so that we can expect better results in the field of agriculture, rural development and desertification. This time round, the segment aimed at improving the knowledge and strengthening the capacity will be of special importance for my country.

Serbia is expected to adopt its Sustainable Development Strategy during 2008. The Strategy is currently being publicly discussed and all stakeholders are expected to make a contribution to devising it. It should be approved by the Government in February 2008 and then sent for adoption in the Parliament.

As a member of the Mountain Partnership, Serbia supports the efforts aimed at allocating more funds for sustainable development of mountain regions. Special efforts should be made to reduce development disparities between those and other regions by investing into projects that accentuate the relative advantages of the mountains, particularly nature- and wildlife-based tourism. At the same time, regional and multilateral cooperation in this field should be improved, all the more so as mountains often spread across borders of many countries. In that context, we encourage the international Global Mountain Partnership to promote and foster exchanges of experience and expertise among mountain regions of the world. As a Party to the Carpathian Convention, Serbia welcomes the decision of the Kiev meeting to adopt a Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity. The draft Law on confirming the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Mountains has been sent to the Parliament and it is expected that it will be adopted soon.

Madam Chairperson,

Climate change is a matter of global concern and Serbia belongs among the most threatened countries. In the last two decades, it has been hit by a number of droughts. Even though we know the consequences of the climate change, we find it ever more difficult to renew the protection role of vegetation and are faced with land degradation of different type and intensity that has affected as much as 86.4 per cent of the land in Serbia. For this reason, the draft Law on the ratification of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, has already been sent to the Parliament and it is expected that it will be adopted soon.

In conclusion, let me inform you that, at the end of last September, the Parliament of Serbia adopted the Law on confirming the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is our contribution to combating climate change and we support the international efforts to reduce, by the year 2050, global emission by at least 50 per cent of those of 1990. Also, Serbia calls on all its Parties to participate actively and constructively in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007 with a view to achieving a comprehensive post-2012 agreement that should include all major emitters and be completed by the end of 2009.

Thank you.