

Distinguished Minister Slavica Djukić Dejanović,
Distinguished Ms Hershey,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to have an opportunity to extend my greetings to all the participants of the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its new composition. I wish to express my gratitude to the Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, Minister Slavica Djukić Dejanović, for the efforts invested in launching, as soon as possible, the design of the activities to which the Republic of Serbia has committed in the context of Agenda 2030 implementation. In the past few years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has intensively engaged in establishing an institutional framework for Agenda implementation, in particular the activities to establish the Inter-Ministerial Working Group.

As is well known, by adopting the Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community committed, at the highest level, to implementing 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets within a relatively short period of fifteen years, thus eradicating extreme poverty, ensuring sustainable economic, social and environmental growth and development, ensuring gender equality and establishing inclusive societies founded on the rule of law and legality. This is an unprecedented, comprehensive and ambitious agenda that builds on the principles and aims of the Charter of the United Nations.

I wish to emphasise that the Republic of Serbia is fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, as one of the 70 members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, it had an active role in formulating the goals of the Agenda, as well as in designing a model for financing it. Three months after the Agenda 2030 was adopted, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Decision Establishing the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the Agenda, composed of representatives of all line ministries, offices and agencies relevant for the coordination of Agenda implementation. Representatives of the civil society, academia and the private sector are also involved in the Group's work. The appointment of the new Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, Minister Slavica Djukić Dejanović, marks the beginning of dynamic work on the adaptation of Agenda goals to the situation in our country. Within its mandate, the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs will continue to support the activities aimed at Agenda implementation and monitoring in the Republic of Serbia, achievement of its goals and targets, as well as preparation of periodic reports on its implementation in the Republic of Serbia. Mutual links and interdependence of these goals are increasingly evident. We are especially interested in sharing experiences of Agenda implementation at the sub-regional, regional and global levels.

I wish to commend the cooperation with the UNCT and Resident Coordinator Karla Robin Hershey in the area of implementation, dissemination and promotion of the Agenda 2030, with the principal goal of ensuring that this process contributes to the overall progress for our society and citizens of the Republic of Serbia. On 21 June this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the UNCT, organised a workshop in Belgrade to discuss the opportunities and linkages between the EU accession negotiation process and the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an EU candidate country, we generally support and follow the EU's highly active approach to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the context of provision of development assistance and concrete projects.

With regard to the complex process of Agenda implementation that awaits us, especially important is the Development Partnership Framework 2016-2020, recently signed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the UNCT, which represents a comprehensive basis for cooperation with and assistance of the UN system, with the aim of promoting and enhancing Serbia's overall economic, social and environmental development. The Development Partnership Framework is fully integrated into and aligned with the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in all spheres of economic and social development, the accession negotiation process between the Republic of Serbia and the European Union, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as strategic guidelines for our development in the next five years.

I will take this opportunity to wish Minister Slavica Djukić Dejanović plenty of success in the chairmanship of the Group, and its members and the UNCT – continued successful cooperation in the forthcoming activities of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group towards Agenda implementation.