

**Speech of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia,
H.E. Ms. Khatuna Gogaladze at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the EAP Task Force**

“Policy Coherence in Support to Green Growth”

High level Segment

Dialogue with Political Leaders

(Tbilisi, September 17, 2013)

(13:45 – 15:30)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my privilege to welcome all of you in Tbilisi. By joining in celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the OECD/EAP Task Force, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, let me express our appreciation to the tremendous work already carried out by this organization and the Task Force and express confidence in the continuation of its action.

OECD has come a long way and we are very thankful for its dedication to meet its commitment – “to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world”.

We appreciate the efforts of OECD, under the framework of the EAP Task Force, to support the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to adjust their environmental and economic goals. On this anniversary it is a great honor for Georgia to pay tribute to all those who are actively involved in these activities and who share this job.

The passage of twenty years has shown how important is the assistance of the EAP Task Force to the countries in the building of public and political support for environmental protection. In the course of the past years, the EAP Task Force has played a vital role in understanding the importance of identification of ways for environmental policy integration into the broader process of economic and political reforms. I would like also, in my turn, to say how much we appreciate the support provided by EAP Task Force in experience sharing among countries of the region on key environmental policy and institutional reforms.

I am glad to see here so many people committed to focus on policy coherence as a driving force for economic development that preserves natural resources, ensures application of principles of green economy, sustainable development and good governance. It is the shape of our common future, future that we share no matter from which part of the world and which walk of life we come.

We have learned through our own experience that without policy coherence no specific policies and programs can reach desired outcomes. With a full confidence I can state that environment has become one of the priority directions of the new Government of Georgia followed by fundamental financial and institutional changes. A number of reforms are underway in different economic sectors of Georgia. The Government makes efforts to support creation of right business environment, building awareness on existing business opportunities, providing research and information. The results of these reforms are expected to enable Georgian businesses and foreign investors to build a dynamic private sector that grows, that innovates, that creates jobs and overall alleviates poverty and provides opportunities in environmentally friendly way.

We are committed to follow this path all the way through.

Green growth is a cross-cutting and complex development issue requiring scientific knowledge, innovation, public understanding, careful development planning, responsible enforcement of policies and legislation, political and legal commitment, enhanced human and institutional capacity and efficient economic development strategies at the national, regional, and international levels. It is not easy to integrate environmental and economic policies. How to move from the theory of using economic instruments to the practice; how to choose the appropriate tools and integrate them with existing regulatory system for effective implementation. How to support industries and at the same time ensure efficient use of energy and natural resources. In other words how we should guarantee that both economic and environmental benefits are in place.

All above require significant efforts from political leaders. In this regard I would like to underline the role of international community that is essential for the success of the process. Therefore, it was the very time to launch the EaP GREEN programme this year which financed by the European Union and by several OECD and EU governments and institutions. This cooperation and support presents example of how the international organizations - OECD, UNECE, UNEP, and UNIDO – assist the countries – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – to move together towards green economy “by promoting

the integration of environmental considerations into the processes of economic, social and political reform”.

Moving towards green development along with existing challenges and pressing needs, there are also huge opportunities. And it is up to each and every one of us how we address those challenges, deal with needs and embrace opportunities. It depends on us how we do it individually and as a part of international community.

At this meeting we have a chance to discuss how economic instruments can be applied to existing situations in order to protect the environment more efficiently while also alleviating poverty, how to improve the capacities of all stakeholders to use these economic instruments in an efficient and effective way. We have to identify best practices and discuss how they could be applied in EECCA countries. These are the days, when we should not only evoke the past and reckon up the potential that OECD/EAP Task Force of today represents, but also commit all our efforts to the practical ways for development of our concerted activities.

In conclusion, in welcoming with confidence EAP Task Force's entry into its third decade, it is our sincere hope that it will continue to promote the governments to work together to meet the common challenges. I would like to underline with full confidence that Georgia is a true partner and assure that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia will continue to support OECD/EAP Task Force in its efforts to accomplish its task on the way of Green Growth.

Thank you for your kind attention and wish you a successful day.