

Speaking notes for the Albania SCCF inception workshop
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Mire Mengjies, Honourable Minister – Mr Koka, Mayor of Lezha – Mr Frroku, dignified ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to address the inception workshop for the Albania Special Climate Change Fund project **‘Building the Resilience of Kune Vain Lagoon through Ecosystem -based Adaptation’**, which is the first SCCF project for UNEP in the region. This project builds on the GEF UNDP project, which resulted in the production of a policy paper and commissioned a series of ecological, economic and social studies within the Drini Mati lagoon system. These studies identified and prioritised a range of potential climate change adaptation interventions to be implemented in the KVLS of which this SCCF-financed project is based on. I wish to extend UNEP’s gratitude to the Government of Albania for offering the opportunity to work with you as an Implementing Agency for this project.

Climate change adaptation has long been one of UNEP’s key priorities and we continue to work in this across various projects around the world at UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Change Adaptation Unit supports developing countries to access funds for country level adaptation actions, in particular the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Development States, with the implementation of adaptation response measures identified in their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (otherwise known as NAPAs) and National Communications. We are now supporting over 20 countries with over 30 projects to access funds for adaptation through the Least Developed Countries Fund, Special Climate Change Fund and Adaptation Fund.

UNEP’s comparative advantage on climate change and adaptation in particular is rooted in its global environmental leadership mandate and convening power. The project is consistent with UNEP’s mandate which is to analyze the state of the global environment, assess global and regional environmental trends, and provide solutions that are based on ecosystems and the environment, and are sustainable in the long term. Initiatives that demonstrate UNEP’s experience in implementing climate change adaptation projects include the facilitation of the completion of 15 NAPAs and assistance of 38 countries in developing their National Communications, which have included vulnerability assessments and studies on adaptation measures.

UNEP is also providing support to developing countries to set up national implementing entities to facilitate direct access to Adaptation Funds such as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. Lastly, through our Global Adaptation Network, UNEP helps build climate resilience of vulnerable communities, ecosystems and economies through the mobilization of knowledge for adaptation - creating knowledge exchange through various regional platforms and networks. These undertakings have laid the foundation for UNEP’s credibility in capacity building, ecosystem management and knowledge dissemination for adaptation at global, regional and national levels.

Through this project, by utilizing the overall in-house capacity and knowledge, it is envisaged that we will contribute to: 1) improving technical and institutional capacity of policy- and decision-makers in Albania to address climate change risks; 2) create best practice and knowledge through the demonstration of integrated adaptation interventions within the Kune Vain Lagoon System such as Ecosystem based approaches to Adaptation ; and 3) improve awareness and knowledge of local communities and national stakeholders on effective adaptation specifically EbA.

I hope these outcomes will not only be sustained beyond the project life, but also be developed as a good practice – an ‘Albanian practice’ to be replicated in other countries of similar conditions through appropriate platforms and knowledge sharing. I wish the team all the success and luck in the execution of this project.

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