Mr. Chair, distinguished members of UNDP’s Executive Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to be here today to address the Board and present UNDP County
Programme Documents for Albania and Montenegro. UNDP enjoys very close cooperation in
both countries, and I want to take this opportunity to thank both Governments for their
substantive leaderships that have enabled us to achieve significant results. I want to also
acknowledge the crucial role of our international partners and bilateral and multilateral donors,
without whom our work in these middle income countries would be much diminished.

Located on the Adriatic Sea, Albania and Montenegro are situated in the heart of Europe
and their development agenda is closely linked with the European integration process. Both
have made important strides over the last cycle. Albania has weathered the financial crisis,
become an EU candidate country, and made important political progress such as with the recent
judicial reform. Montenegro is progressing well in the Euro-Atlantic accession process initiating
the legal and institutional reforms necessary for membership. However, they also share
development challenges common to middle income economies, including persistent inequalities,
institutional capacity gaps -- especially on the sub-national level -- environment and climate
change threats, as well as the need for increased political and economic participation of women.

I am proud that in the course of the past five years, as UNDP we have been able to
address many of these problems. In Albania, the highlight of our partnership has been the
successful territorial reform and increased number of women in elected positions. In
Montenegro, the programme is recognized in UNDP for promoting innovation in social services, with special application of information technology and the work of the Centre on Sustainable Development in promoting Montenegro's best practices as an eco-state, in areas such as low carbon tourism.

Building on these achievements and in line with the SDGs and Agenda 2030, UNDP will continue to focus on governance, rule of law and human rights, as well as productive capacities and growth which provide opportunities to the vulnerable and underserved segments of the population. We will also continue to work on environmental protection and climate change priorities.

The overall financial envelope for the UNDP Country Programme in Albania will amount to $43 million and the resource mobilization target for Montenegro is estimated at about $32 million. We count on the contributions of both Governments in the national-cost sharing modality and look forward to working with the bilateral and multilateral donors on achieving these ambitious goals.

Thank you very much for your attention.