**25th International Resource Panel Meeting**

**Bled, 5 November 2019**

**dr. Miro Cerar**

Dear members of the International Resource Panel,

I am actually not surprised that your meeting is taking place here, at Bled.

Your co-chair and my dear friend Dr. Janez Potočnik comes from this beautiful part of Slovenia, from a place only 20 km away from here. If he hadn't quoted to you our greatest poet, Dr. France Prešeren, yet – let me use this site-specific occasion. In his epic poem, *The Baptism at the Savica*, which he wrote almost 200 years ago, Prešeren said about Bled that Slovenia

 (…) *has no prettier scene*

 *than this, resembling paradise serene.*

Welcome in Slovenia, where our greatest resources besides poets are – natural!

Forests cover almost two-thirds of the territory. And Slovenia is seriously rich with water resources, from emerald rivers to Alpine lakes. And yes, we have inscribed the right to drinking water into our Constitution.

Our determination to preserve these gifts of nature has lead us to take **concrete steps such as introducing green and environmental taxes**, as well as **financial incentives for energy-efficient housing, purchase of electric cars and use of renewable energy sources**. In that sense it is not surprising that we have been recognized as one of the most sustainable countries in the world.

However, while acting locally, we must also **think globally** – and if I may aid, **multilaterally**! It is for this reason that I attach such importance to the work of the International Resource Panel and the fact that it has decided to meet here.

When addressing prominent guests two months ago at the annual Bled Strategic Forum, at the venue up the hill, directly opposite from what is actually our only island, I have used the saying that "**no country is an island"**. It is only together that we can move from words to deeds in this complex world of ours. But on this way, we need the expert guidance of groups as eminent as yours. Indeed, in light of the impact of climate change on natural resources and the fact that they are linked to all the sustainable development goals the work of the IRP is indispensable, both in terms of scientific research and policy guidance.

We are lucky to have Janez Potočnik. Not only with his experience of key-negotiator in the process of Slovenia's EU accession, but also with a broader picture of a two-terms European Commissionaire. I was lucky enough to get introduced to the topic of circular economy by him – and as law professor and Prime Minister I've tried to prove I was good student. **With Slovenia's presidency the EU Council in 2021, in a company of Germany and Portugal,** I am certain that we can move this agenda further – and make it even more concrete.

In this connection, let me highlight the attention that the Panel devotes to the need for concrete actions to ensure **long-term patterns of sustainable consumption and production**. Indeed, a socially fair transition to a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy is in the best interest of our and the future generations.

I would therefore like to inform you that the **promotion of a circular economy is also one of the priorities of the Green Grou**p. This is an informal forum of Foreign Ministers of Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and Slovenia, which was launched ten years ago, with the aim of advancing the important environmental agenda in international relations. I am personally engaged to steer the future work of the group.

In conclusion, let me assure you that Slovenia was, is and will continue to be a **staunch supporter of the work of the IRP.** In fact, I would say that we are partners in advocating for the protection of natural resources worldwide and that we share the goal of their transformation from drivers of conflicts into tools for development, peace and cooperation.

I wish you a successful meeting!

Thank you.