

Good morning

Dr. Berj Hatjian General Director of the Ministry of Environment; Dr. Bassam Frenn, General Director of the Industrial Research Institute and Dr Ali Yaacoub, Director from the Lebanese Cleaner Production Centre. Good morning and thank you very much for your assistance. Thanks also to all the companies that are here today and all the participants.

Thank you very much for being with us.

It's a pleasure to welcome you to this national forum on the best available techniques as mechanisms to enhance the green competitiveness in Lebanon

Today is especially a great day for the Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production, CP/RAC, as we have the opportunity to launch in Lebanon the GRECO INITIATIVE, a Green Competitiveness INITIATIVE. For us it's another step towards the promotion and the application of Best Available Techniques and Cleaner Production (Green Competitiveness) in this key country for the development in the Mediterranean.

Allow me to briefly tell you about our centre. CP/RAC, where the GRECO Initiative was born, is based in Barcelona and, since 1996; it is one of the 6 Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program.

The overall mission of CP/RAC consists in promoting patterns of sustainable consumption and production in the Mediterranean. Likewise since 2008 the centre is also responsible for the elimination

of Persistent Organic Pollutants to the Mediterranean environment and, since May of the current year it has been endorsed as Regional Centre under the Stockholm Convention.

Another important responsibility has come to us now, and that is the promotion of the GRECO INITIATIVE along the Mediterranean Region to support the "Green Competitiveness" concept based on Cleaner Production strategy and the application of the Best Available Techniques. The green competitiveness is a revolutionary concept which objective is to implement measures to improve companies' profitability along with environment benefits.

Today we are also signing one important document to promote the implementation of the GRECO Initiative, namely the Memorandum Of Understanding between the CP/RAC, the Industrial Research Institute and the Lebanese Cleaner Production Centre.

With all that, we are very pleased that this Forum will be an opportunity to show how CP/RAC and the Lebanese institutions will be keen on developing partnerships on the GRECO initiative and to hear, from real experiences among Mediterranean Countries about the prevention of pollution from the industrial sector and the upgrading of this sector through the application of cleaner techniques.

Let me thank you all once again for your attendance to this National Forum.

Receive my gratitude and thank you very much.