Speech Text of Ismail BELEN

On the Occasion of the Closing Ceremony of the regional project

**“Adapting Framework Conditions of Forest Policy to Climate Change in the Mena Region”**

President of Silva Mediterranea

11 November 2015

Golden Tulip Farah Rabat

Dear Guest,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen’s,

We are here on the occasion of the closing of the regional project **“Adapting Framework Conditions of Forest Policy to Climate Change in the Mena Region”** carried out as part of Silva Mediterranea-Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests.

Using this opportunity I would like to greet you on behalf of myself, my wife, my Country-Turkey, and as the President of Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions -Silva Mediterranea.

Dear Colleagues,

Since from 2008, the last 8 years have become a pretty successful period for Mediterranean Forestry. We celebrated four Mediterranean Forestry Weeks, which the first one was in Turkey in the year of 2010, the second in France, the third in Algeria and the last in Spain. We acted important role on the Declaration of 21st March as the International Day of Forests by United Nations General Assembly.

The “Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests” initiative, we started in 2010, has been very successful. And believe in me that this initiative is being followed by the other countries like Central Asians.

The project of “Adapting framework conditions of forest policy to climate change in the MENA region”, which we are here today for it, has been implemented successfully. Our second project “Maximize the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes” funded by the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) has also being implemented very well.

There has been always a powerful and result-oriented team on the basis of these activities. All people and stakeholders, including the ones from FAO Forestry Department and country representatives worked very active and efficiently.

I always believe that, people are the most important part of everything.

This project has been implemented under the general umbrella of Silva Mediterranea. For this reason, I would like to thank to Silva Mediterranea team including;

* Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department
* Moujahed Achouri and Susan Braatz
* Of course to Christophe Besacier,
* And of course to Dr. Nicolas Picard, Ms. Valentina Garavaglia and Ms. Caterina Marchetta.

I acknowledged the support by French Government to Silva Mediterranea I greet to Alain Chaudron and Catherine Rivoal. During the times, we have lost some of our friends like Dr. Şükran Gökdemir from Turkey, a close friend of me. I wish Mercy of God for her.

Dear Guest,

This project has very special meaning for me. I was here, in Rabat, at the same hotel, for its first meeting in July, 2009. They implemented this project in successfully with a wonderful team.

So I would like to congratulate this dream team.

M. Reinhard Alexander KASTL, Mrs. Heidrun STROEBERT-BELOUD, Mrs. Gisa MARGGRAFF, Mrs. Nada TAREK, M. Mourad BOUAYAD and M. Ludwig LIAGRE.

I also congratulate the “The High Commission for Waters, Forests and Combating Desertification (HCEFLCD) of Morocco” and its representatives. Especially my friend, The Secretary General Mr. Abderrahim Houmy and his team for hosting this project.

I also remember my Turkish Colleagues, including;

* Mr. Osman Kahveci, The Former Director General of GDF
* Mr. Abdullah Büber, The Former Head of Department
* Mr. Suat Türeyen, the Former Division Director
* Ms. Gülay Yaşin, The Former Country Officer of gtz to Turkey and of course the others.

Dear Colleagues,

I believed “Mediterranean Forests” as our home and nest and we are the members of this family. For this reason I came to this closing ceremony with my lovely wife, Ms. Züleyha Belen. With this opportunity I would like to thank her for usual support, for being a wonderful mother for my children.

As the final words, on behalf of myself, my country and the Committee of Silva Mediterranea, I declare that this project has been implemented and concluded in very successful way. I know that, Mr. Reinhard Alexander KASTL has crucial role on this.

So, on behalf of this team, I would like to give him a tiny gift to remember this family.

I wish the best for all of us.

Best regards.