6 December 2013

Dear GBEP Partners and Observers,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the great honor of serving as the co-chair of the Working Group for Capacity Building on Sustainable Bioenergy. I am truly grateful for your support and commitment to tackle the important issues we faced and to implement the initiatives we developed together. The difficult work we did in establishing indicators for the sustainable production and use of modern bioenergy and the subsequent commitment to capacity building efforts will help countries move away from the unsustainable use of traditional biomass towards more sustainable modern bioenergy, as one example. As a result of our successful collaboration, the Partnership has become a global leader with an important voice in the discussions on the nexus of bioenergy and sustainable development.

As is customary in diplomatic service, I have moved on to a new assignment. I am now serving as the Director of the Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Office for Central and Eastern Europe based in the U.S. Embassy in Budapest. In this capacity, I work with 20 countries to promote closer collaboration on similar issues of sustainable development. As excited as I am by this new opportunity, I can say without exaggeration that working with you in GBEP was one of the highlights of my professional career. I learned a great deal from each one of you, and I will always treasure the experience, even when we had an unplanned, extended stay in Bamako, Mali.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to also thank the Co-Chairs of GBEP for their unwavering support and the Secretariat team and its fearless leader for all of their tireless efforts to guide the Partnership and help us maintain focus on the important tasks at hand.

I wish you continued success in Rome and thereafter, both collectively and individually. Since the world is much smaller than we imagine and becoming more so with each passing day, I will not say good-bye, but simply so long for now and look forward to seeing you again in the future.

Very best wishes,

Raffi Balian