

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Costis Stambolis,
Deputy Chairman and Executive Director of IENE**

Your Excellency Minister Ioannis Maniatis,
Your Excellencies emissaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens and
of the Turkish Embassy in Athens,
Dear Colleagues,

I wish to welcome you all to today's event, the Upstream Regional Workshop which covers the Adriatic, the Black Sea and the East Mediterranean which IENE is organising in Athens for the second consecutive year. Especially, I would like to welcome our colleagues from abroad who took the time and made the effort to travel and be among us today. So that we may have speakers from Austria, Italy, Albania, Romania, Israel, Cyprus and most of all from Turkey. I wish you all a most pleasant stay in Athens.

Before giving the floor to Minister Ioannis Maniatis, I would like very briefly to say few things about the workshop.

The scope of this event is twofold:

- (a) To review latest progress and achievements in the hydrocarbon exploration and production sector in the region
- (b) To bring together some of the region's key players and hence help facilitate the exchange of views and experiences.

At a time of monumental changes in global geopolitical perspectives and the re-alignment of regional policies and of alliances, in place over many years, the need to identify, analyse and re-assess the region's energy potential becomes all the more apparent. Hence, our small gathering today is I believe of great interest while its structure and provisions for an open and frank exchange of views and data will only contribute towards this direction.

May I now call upon Minister Ioannis Maniatis to take the floor.