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Under-Secretary-General

Opening statement

by

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United Nations Under-Secretary-General

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe**

At the

Sixth session of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships

1 December 2022, 10:00 CET, Salle XXIV

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you all to the sixth session of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships.

I am pleased to see so many delegates joining us in person and online, which is an indication of the interests by the member States in the contribution of this Working Party to sustainable PPP and infrastructure finance.

Infrastructure remains crucial to social and economic development for our people. Green, resilient, circular and high-quality infrastructure is also key to rebuilding cities and communities ravaged by disasters and armed conflicts.

This year's session is taking place while a war is still raging in Ukraine and its devastating effects are being felt in the region and beyond. PPPs can play a crucial role in the reconstruction process. I am happy to see that you will be exploring some opportunities, but also some challenges, to **accelerate the delivery of PPPs and infrastructure projects in the reconstruction phase** in post-pandemic, post-disaster and post-war contexts. In particular, I am pleased to welcome our United Nations colleagues from the **Resident**



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Coordinator Office and UNDP in Kyiv and senior officials from the **Ministry of Economy and the PPP Agency of Ukraine** who will share with us their experience restoring critical public services and their work on the reconstruction of critical infrastructure in Ukraine.

Today, the Working Party remains **the only intergovernmental body in the United Nations system** dedicated to sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance. Since its establishment in 2017, the Working Party has been at the forefront to ensure that the PPP model was “fit-for-purpose” for the Sustainable Development Goals, with people as the main beneficiaries of infrastructure and public services. Through its “PPP for the SDGs” approach, with its five distinctive outcomes, the Working Party has developed guiding principles, standards and an Evaluation Methodology to help UNECE member States measure their PPP and infrastructure projects against the three pillars of sustainability.

With its mandate extended for a further five years, as decided by the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships last spring, and later on approved by the Executive Committee this autumn, the Working Party has the opportunity to propel the UNECE PPPs for the SDGs programme to the next level by:



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1. **Developing policy documents** on a range of issues: on sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction; corruption; pandemic preparedness and response; food security; women's empowerment; and digital and green transformations for sustainable development, including the transition to the circular economy;
2. **Mainstreaming sustainable finance** – including transition finance – into the PPP work to address the ever-increasing infrastructure investment gap, climate change, a better recovery from the pandemic, and to contribute to sustainable recovery and reconstruction; and
3. **Deliver demand-driven capacity building and policy advisory services** to improve project delivery and attract sustainable and climate finance.

I have, at the outset, mentioned some of the challenges that the UNECE region is facing and I am happy to see that you will be considering them when deciding on the priority areas to focus on in the years to come. In doing so, the Working Party can make a meaningful contribution to the cross-cutting themes to be discussed at the 70th Commission session: *Circular economy and Digital transformation*. I am very happy to see that you have before you **two guidelines on the transition to the circular**

economy, which will feed into the work of the forthcoming Commission session in April 2023.

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation to the **Government of Greece** for its most generous offer to host the 7th edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in Athens in May 2023. I am most grateful to the **Government of Spain** for hosting this year's edition of the Forum in Barcelona. The UNECE International PPP Forum has become an annual event to exchange ideas and address some of the current and emerging challenges in sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Having reliable partners to co-organise the sessions of the Forum is crucial to ensure a high-level of service to our member States.

The compendium of case studies presented at the Forum in Barcelona provided a source of inspiration for the **UNECE-wide compendium on climate projects** that was presented at the **Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs on 17 October 2022 ahead of COP27**. I am very proud of this achievement, and the compendium contains 30 climate projects at pre-finance stage: 28 national projects in 12 UNECE member States; and 2 regional projects, for a total investment value of 20 billion US dollars, in core sectors such as renewable energy, digital



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transformation, sustainable transportation. This compendium, which has **caught the attention of international media**, such as Bloomberg, demonstrates that our 17 programme countries have **ready-to-finance climate projects**. It is now up to the investors to seize the opportunity and invest in these projects, and I am confident that this Working Party will also play a role in promoting the compendium in its activities to ensure that more sustainable and climate finance can be mobilized towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

I very much look forward to hearing the results of your deliberations, and I wish all of you a very productive two days.

Thank you.