ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
68th Commission Session

STATEMENT AUSTRIA
(check against delivery)

Excellency’s, ladies and gentlemen,

Austria would like to align itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its Member States and would like to make the following remarks in a national capacity:

We would like to join others in thanking the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Commission for their efforts these past two years.

We would also like to commend the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat for the progress that has been achieved over the past two years, especially with regards to the alignment of the work of ECE with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome this year’s theme of the Commission, “Smart Sustainable Cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development”, which is very pertinent in view of Agenda 2030, the urbanization in our region and the work of the ECE. As more people move to cities, we need to ensure that these cities are future-proof. An outstanding example of this future proofing within the framework of ECE is the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, THE PEP. This initiative works, for example, on sustainable urban transport. Later this year, the Austrian government will host the fifth ministerial high-level meeting of THE PEP under the theme “Making Mobility Green and Healthy: Paving the pan-European way towards prosperity and happy citizens”. We look forward to the active participation of ECE Member States in the work of the conference, which amongst other includes the adoption of the Pan-European strategy towards a zero emission, economically prosperous and socially fair and healthy mobility.

Mr. Chair,

The Commission will consider several important decisions this session, in this regard; Austria would like to voice its support for the high-level statement, which highlights the value of ECE normative instruments and standard-setting activities in the context of Agenda 2030.
The Commission also has before it the revised Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Ageing, based on the agreement reached between Member States in informal consultations. Ageing is an important issue, especially in the ECE region, where the ageing population has far reaching economic and social implications. Austria has always participated actively in the important work of the Group and we welcome the transformation of the Group into a standing body, with a view to enhancing the continuity of the work of ECE in the area of ageing.

Thank you Mr. Chair.