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**Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Christian Friis Bach**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary**

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

**at**

**'Belt and Road' Forum for International Cooperation  
Session on Connectivity of Development Policies and Strategies  
Beijing, China**

**14 May 2017**

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honor to address this historic forum. We share the anticipation of huge achievements ahead — a huge boost to trade, investments, a great coming together of people and businesses. The opportunities are phenomenal. With the success of the Belt & Road we will also make significant progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UNECE develops norms, standards and conventions for economic cooperation. They are used by our member States along the Belt & Road, and they are used beyond our region in the rest of the world.

This is the case for our work on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Here we take the “high road”! We help to develop People First PPPs that are green, increase access to essential services and provide citizens with the right and possibility to participate.

Our standards for People First PPPs help countries, cities and companies to implement PPP policies and projects, we work with PPP Centers of Excellence including in Beijing and Hong Kong, and we have launched our campaign towards 500 People First PPP projects by the end of the year. We are pleased here at the forum to strengthen our cooperation with China towards People First PPPs by signing an MOU with the National Development and Reform Commission.

The soft law is as important as the infrastructure,

- We are pleased to welcome China to our TIR convention that will greatly boost trade, transport and transit along the Belt & Road - even more with the digital eTIR.
  - Our road safety conventions and vehicle regulations are key to ensure safety on our roads and to ensure intelligent and autonomous mobility solutions.
  - The Euro-Asian Transport Links project help identify the main road and rail routes.
  - The new unified railway law that can boost cargo transport on the railways from Asia to Europe.
  - Our UN/CEFACT and EDIFACT standards for trade facilitation and electronic trade will help cut red tape and build a digital silk road.
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- Our UN Framework Classification System for Resources will help utilize the best energy resources;
- And we also offer our expertise with other instruments such as the Aarhus Convention on public participation and the Espoo Convention on environmental assessment.

Mr. Chairman, we are strongly behind this historic initiative. Let's work together towards a sustainable, safe, digital and efficient Belt and Road.

Thank you.

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