



**Message by Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
65th session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**Delivered on his behalf by Mr. Joshua Lincoln,
Chef de Cabinet**

**Palais des Nations, Room XVIII
Tuesday, 9 April 2013 from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.**

Mr. Chairman
Mr. Executive Secretary
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Palais des Nations on behalf of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The Director-General regrets that he is not able to take part personally in this important 65th Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe but has asked me to transmit his best wishes for a successful meeting as well as the following message:

“The agenda of this Session highlights key priorities before the entire United Nations system. While we in several contexts witness improvement, it is clear that the economic crisis and uncertainty continue. The IMF has predicted that global growth will only reach 3.5 per cent in 2013. Some 200 million people are unemployed globally and the number of jobseekers is expected to increase. In an interdependent, open and competitive world economy, the sluggish pace and uneven spread of the recovery affects all countries.

The 56 Members of the UNECE represent a dynamic but also highly diverse region, with a range of economic models, approaches and strengths. Growth, inflation and employment rates differ significantly. Our common challenge therefore must be to facilitate economic integration that will allow all countries to consolidate progress and realize their potential within this reality of diversity.

In this context, the two items of the high-level segment – first, “Follow up to Rio+20 and post-2015 development agenda” and second, the “Role of innovation in a dynamic and competitive economy” – are particularly important.

Science, technology and innovation form the indispensable foundation for the creation of new business opportunities, investment and jobs, regardless of circumstances and resources.

As we have now entered the final 1,000 days before the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, the clear linking at this Session of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development could not be more timely. Our success in

achieving the MDGs and in establishing a strong post-2015 framework will depend on our ability to address all three dimensions equally and effectively. Despite progress, poverty, inequality and social exclusion are still realities for the most vulnerable or marginalized groups in the UNECE region. This issue must be confronted.

I would like to commend the long-standing emphasis in the UNECE on environmental challenges. As we mark the International Year of Water Cooperation, this Session is a significant opportunity to strengthen collaborative efforts on shared water resources.

Similarly, the UNECE has been breaking new ground in bridging the gap between the public and private economic spheres with its work on Public Private Partnerships – PPP.

We at the United Nations Office at Geneva greatly appreciate our collaboration with the UNECE in exploring the potential of PPP, as part of the Strategic Heritage Plan for the renovation of the Palais des Nations. The outcome of these joint efforts will be presented to Member States in the General Assembly for consideration and decision later in the year. We are leveraging the experience and expertise of the UNECE in our buildings and maintenance work, a partnership that is a practical demonstration of the value of One United Nations, delivering across institutional lines. I hope it may serve as inspiration throughout the system.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Against a background of profound transformations, the UNECE's ability to combine regional and global perspectives represents a highly valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations. The UNECE produces concrete and tangible products that are meaningful for people's daily lives. I have no doubt that this Session will be an opportunity to explore how the UNECE's work can be further strengthened as an integral part of the United Nations' broader, collective efforts, for the benefit of people in Europe and beyond.

I wish you productive discussions and a successful Session.

Thank you very much.