

**Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public  
Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters  
Fourth session  
Chisinau, 29 June - 1 July 2011  
High-Level Segment**

**Welcoming remarks by Mr Ján Kubiš,  
Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

Thank you to all present at this fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention. I am glad to have the opportunity to address you, albeit briefly.

As you may know, the Aarhus Convention is one of five multilateral environmental agreements under the UNECE. Each one is significant in its own right, but the Aarhus Convention stands amongst them as a very special treaty, whose unique contribution to environmental democracy is recognized far beyond the UNECE region.

On the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Aarhus Convention's entry into force, I would like to thank all those present for their strong commitment, including financially, to supporting the implementation of the Convention both in their own country and across the region. While for many Parties, significant progress has been made towards making the Aarhus vision a reality, much still remains to be done, and in the current economic climate, your continued financial support of the Convention's workplan is invaluable.

At this celebration of the Convention's first decade, I am delighted to be able to convey to you a special message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General gives very serious attention to issues of democracy in general, and it is thus with great pleasure that I will now share his message with you.