



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 308 — 23-27 February 2009

Swearing in of new Executive Secretary

Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, swore an oath of loyalty to the United Nations on 10 February in New York in the presence of the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. This ceremony has taken place in recent years for all Under-Secretary Generals and Assistant Secretary-Generals who are in a duty station which is a main Office of the United Nations.

The text of the oath is the one that all United Nations staff officially sign upon taking office. It reads as follows:

"I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties, from any Government or other source external to the Organization.

I also solemnly declare and promise to respect the obligations incumbent upon me as set out in the Staff Regulations and Rules."



Following the ceremony, Mr. Kubiš met with the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General to discuss the work of the UNECE and how that links to the priorities of member States and the Secretary-General. ■

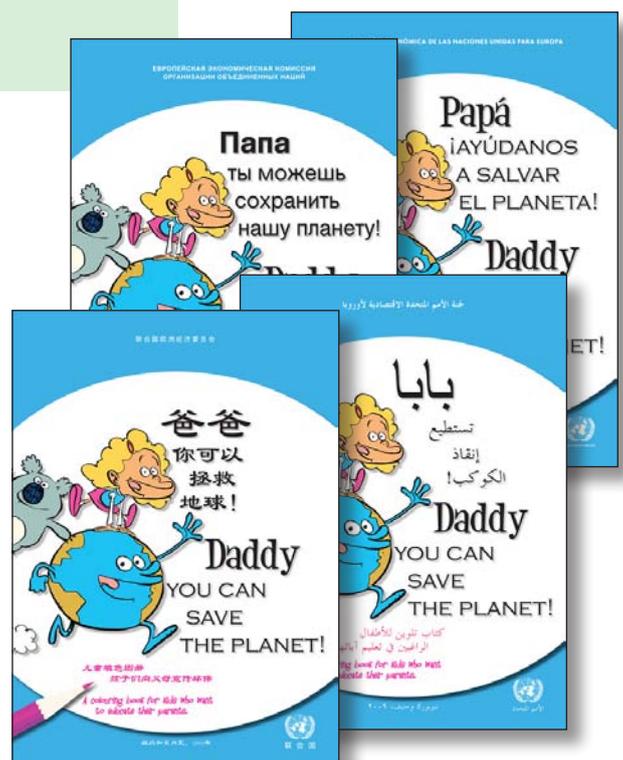
Daddy you can save the planet! Now in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish

Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary of UNECE, presented on 20 February the Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions of the colouring book *Daddy you can save the planet!* first released in English and French by UNECE in 2007.

This colouring book aims at raising children's, and their parents', awareness about all those little gestures that can have a big influence in limiting the impact of our daily activities on the environment: recycling paper, avoiding wasting water, switching off the light when leaving a room, using a bicycle instead of a car, etc.

The launch of *Daddy you can save the planet!* in an additional four official United Nations languages constitutes a further step in UNECE's initiatives to contribute to mitigating climate change and ensuring environmental sustainability, one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2000.

Daddy you can save the planet! is distributed worldwide via the United Nations Publications Sales and Marketing network, and the UN Bookshops in New York and Geneva (see the United Nations publications website at <http://unp.un.org>). ■



Not an official record - For information only

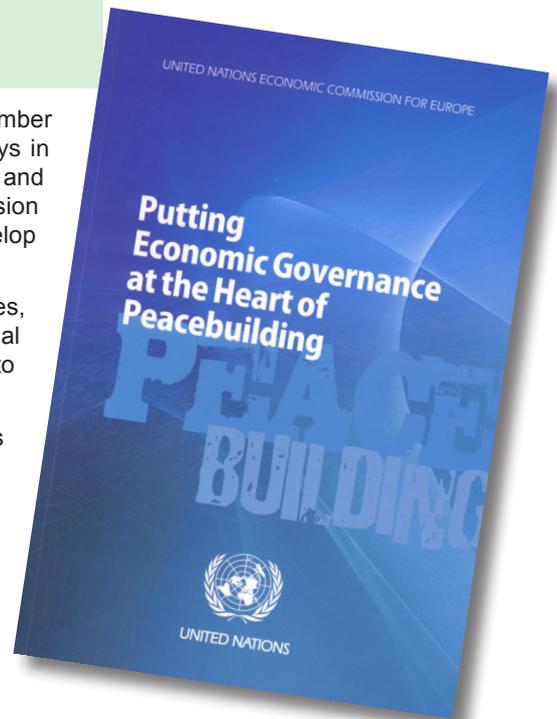
Peacebuilding and economic governance

The establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in December 2005 was an important evolution in the vital role that the United Nations plays in assisting post-conflict countries emerge towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and in mobilizing sustained international attention. The Commission brings together all relevant actors and helps post-conflict countries to develop effective coordinated, coherent and integrated peacebuilding strategies.

While the work of the Peacebuilding Commission focuses on individual countries, there is a clear recognition of the need to consider these in a wider regional perspective. Sharing experiences across regions is a valuable contribution to strengthening this key regional dimension of the peacebuilding response.

Drawing on the long-standing, wide-ranging expertise of UNECE, this publication shows the importance of establishing a well-governed economy, with adequately functioning institutions and public administration, for ending violence and ensuring lasting peace. Building on practical experience, the compilation fills a gap in our collective knowledge about how to break the pernicious link between ill-developed economies and entrenched conflict, and how to enable governments to play an effective role in economic decision-making after conflict.

As demonstrated through UNECE's activities, regional economic integration and trade can reinforce long-term stability. The five key principles for sound economic governance distilled from UNECE's work and outlined in this publication can help to inspire and focus peacebuilding efforts in regions other than Europe, by forming the basis of post-conflict economic strategies. ■

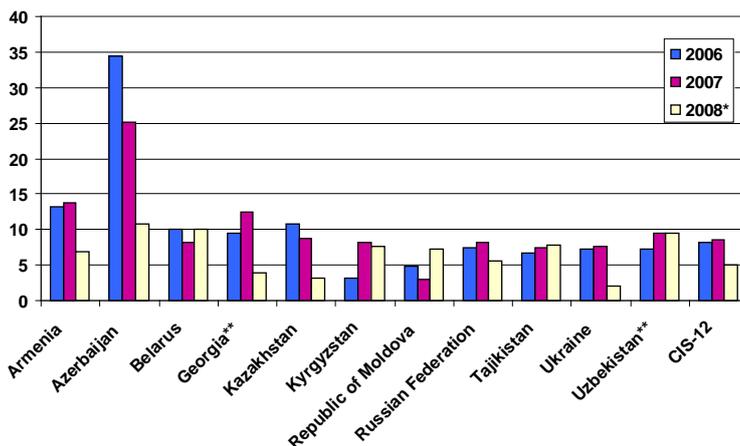


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FACTS AND FIGURES

GDP growth decelerates visibly in 2008 in most countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States

Annual GDP growth, 2006-2008
(in per cent)



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>), CIS Statistical Committee and national statistics.

* Flash estimates by national statistical offices. No data yet available for Turkmenistan
** Data available only for January-September

According to the 2008 flash estimates of gross domestic product (GDP), the economic crisis hit many CIS countries during the last quarter of the year: the economic slowdown was most rapid in Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Only in Kyrgyzstan did GDP growth accelerate towards the end of the year.

Ukraine seems to have suffered the largest decline during the last quarter. Declining import demand from the neighbouring countries and the fall in world prices for steel and chemicals led to a considerable contraction of industrial production at the end of 2008. In the Russian Federation, the dampening impact of plummeting oil and metal prices on the economy that had become apparent already in the third quarter (see UNECE Weekly No. 303) aggravated further, and the GDP growth for the whole year 2008 is estimated to be the lowest in the last six years.

In fact, the estimated GDP growth rate for 2008 was only about half the rate of 2007 in five out of eleven CIS countries. Only the Republic of Moldova, Belarus and Tajikistan seem to have reached higher GDP growth compared to the previous year. However, the deepening global financial crisis and growing caution among households will most likely dampen further economic activity in the CIS region. ■