



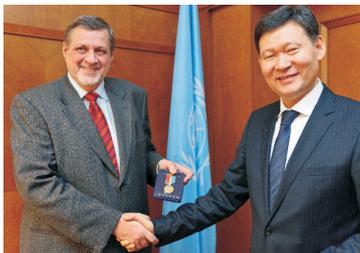
United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 456 — 12 - 16 December 2011

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AWARDED MEDAL FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO UN-KAZAKH BILATERAL COOPERATION



On 7 December, Mr. Kairat Umarov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, awarded the "20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of Kazakhstan" medal to Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary.

The medal was awarded by the Government of Kazakhstan in recognition for his contribution to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In his address, Mr. Umarov congratulated Ján Kubiš on his recent appointment as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and head of the UN mission in Afghanistan.

In his answer, Ján Kubiš stressed the active cooperation between Kazakhstan and UNECE, mentioning among recent examples, the success of the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Astana (21–23 September 2011), the cooperation on transboundary water and the safety of dams in Central Asia or the recent launch of the Innovation Performance Review of Kazakhstan.

Other areas of mutual interest include the project Financing Energy Efficiency Investments for Climate Change Mitigation (FEEI) and discussions of the launch of a regional project on the forestation of the dry bed of the Aral Sea. □

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "EUROPE-ASIA TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION"

15 - 16 DECEMBER - PALAIS DES NATIONS

UNECE is organizing an International Conference on "Europe-Asia transboundary water cooperation" on 15 - 16 December at Palais des Nations.

The Conference, which is held in the framework of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), aims to promote dialogue and cooperation on the management and protection of transboundary waters along the border of the European and Asian continents.

Many transboundary river basins lie at the border between Europe and Asia and are an important source of drinking water, irrigation and hydropower. Sustainable use of these resources is key for the development of riparian countries. In view of the expected impacts on the availability of water resources arising from economic development, population growth and climate change, transboundary cooperation becomes more and more crucial in order to prevent conflicts, optimize the use of resources and ensure sustainability.

More than 90 delegates representing the Governments of Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam as well as intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and civil society organizations will gather to exchange experiences on the progress achieved and the challenges ahead.

The conference will provide a platform to discuss the following issues:

- Balancing different interests for development in transboundary basins
- Disaster risk reduction and prevention, preparedness and response to industrial accidents
- Extreme weather events and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins
- Protection of ecosystem and water quality
- Legal and institutional aspects of transboundary water cooperation.



The conference will also contribute to the preparation of the opening of the Water Convention beyond the UNECE region to all UN Member States, which UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon welcomed in his address to UNECE's Executive Committee on 18 October 2011. □

For further information, please visit: [http://unece.org/euro\\_asia\\_conference.html](http://unece.org/euro_asia_conference.html).

## UNECE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR RIO+20 CALLS FOR ADOPTION OF A GREEN ECONOMY ROAD MAP



The UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD; Rio+20 Conference), held on 1 and 2 December in Geneva, reflected growing interest in sustainable development goals and strong support for the adoption of a green economy road map. This road map should include political and action-oriented components and set a vision for the next two decades.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting, the last of five regional preparatory meetings, was convened by UNECE in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The meeting attracted some 400 participants, including 160



from Major Groups. Participants engaged in discussions on:

- An assessment of the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development as well as new and emerging challenges.
- A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- The institutional framework for sustainable development.

Concerning outcomes from the major summits and specific progress in the region, participants recognized the region's progress in implementing multilateral environmental agreements, and the importance of UNECE processes and regional conventions, as well as initiatives such as the creation of Regional Environmental Centers. The need for improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of progress in sustainable development, better integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, and stronger regional coherence and cooperation was, however, highlighted.

Regarding the green economy, the need for a road map was strongly backed, at the same time making sure that the policy mix avoids a one-size-fits-all approach but rather accommodates the unique challenges faced by different countries. The discussion clearly indicated that the concept should not be separated from the general objective of poverty eradication. Participants also stressed the importance of data and indicators for assessing progress towards a green

economy. Discussions pointed at the need for fundamental changes in consumption and production patterns to reduce absolute levels of resource consumption.

Participants noted that discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development had gained momentum, with a virtual consensus on weaknesses in the current institutional arrangements, including fragmentation and limitations in terms of resources and authority. There was also agreement on the importance of strengthening governance at the regional, national and local levels. However, discussions reflected a lack of consensus on responses.

The meeting noted that UNECE was the only region so far with a legally binding instrument on the implementation of Principle 10, namely, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

The Co-Chairs' summary of the meeting was sent to the UNCSO secretariat as an input for the UNCSO Compilation Document and will be presented at the Second Intersessional Meeting, taking place in New York on 15 and 16 December 2011.

Outcomes of the meeting will also be reflected in a final version of a regional inter-agency report for the Rio+20 Conference, "From Transition to Transformation: Sustainable and Inclusive Development in Europe and Central Asia", coordinated by UNECE, a draft of which was submitted to the RPM. □

*For further information, please visit:*

<http://www.unece.org/env/sustainabledevelopment/rpm2011/rpm2011.html>

## **CIS COUNTRIES DECIDE TO APPLY UNECE'S INFORMATION STANDARDS**

The CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification decided to include in its standards-development programme for 2012 some major e-standards and recommendations drawn up by UNECE and its Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), at its 40<sup>th</sup> session in Baku on 29 November.

"This decision opens a new page in UNECE-CIS cooperation on information technologies and standards", said Mr. Grigori Elkin, head of the Russian Federal Agency on Technical Regulation and Metrology (ROSSTANDART), the agency that put forward the proposal.

The decision constitutes an important breakthrough in the use and promotion of UNECE standards in the CIS region. This was the first time that CIS countries discussed implementing UNECE-UN/CEFACT information standards and the following eight countries were represented at the event—Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The growing globalization of the international economy and trade is creating new challenges for the integration of

companies from transition economies into global supply chains. Along with the traditional market factors, today's challenges for companies include the ability to use information technologies and standards to ensure control over their products, cost effectiveness and on-time delivery.



The standards suggested for transposition and implementation include UN/EDIFACT—the world's most widely used standard for electronic data exchange. It has also been adopted as ISO standard 9735. Another is the UNECE standard for a uniform format and the harmonization of paper documents—the UN Layout Key (also adopted as ISO standard ISO 6422).

UNECE continues to work actively with the countries in transition to build awareness and capacity in the area of electronic standards and trade facilitation. Cooperation with these countries will be further pursued within a new UNECE project to help developing and transition economies link to global supply chains by reducing obstacles to trade. This project begins with a Global Trade Facilitation Conference, organized by UNECE, on 12 and 13 December 2011 in Geneva. □

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