UNECE participated in the Rio+20 Conference with a small delegation led by the Executive Secretary. It organized or co-organized a number of events to share experience and good practices in several areas, namely:

- **Access to information and public participation in decision-making**
  In two events, UNECE highlighted the importance of some of its regional environmental conventions, in particular the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions, as models for ensuring public input in decision-making processes and choosing the most appropriate road maps to a green economy. In this regard, representing the Latin American region have expressed their interest in developing a legally binding instrument similar to the Aarhus Convention and asked UNECE to share its expertise and experience. UNECE also underscored the importance of education for sustainable development to equip people with the values and skills needed to put sustainable development into practice.

- **Transboundary water cooperation**
  UNECE promoted its Water Convention as an important framework for cooperation on transboundary waters. The Convention has supported its Parties and non-Parties in the establishment and strengthening of transboundary cooperation through the development of guidance, the continuous exchange of experience and direct support on the ground. The Convention is expected to be open for global accession by the end of this year.

- **Sustainable forest management**
  In two events, UNECE promoted the joint work of UNECE and FAO to develop an Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy. The forest sector in the UNECE region already provides a good example of the sustainable use of resources and delivers green products and services. The plan aims at strengthening these aspects and helping further minimize the sector’s carbon emissions. The Plan is meant to inspire action and provide the basis for many organizations’ plans and activities so that they focus on forests in a green economy.

- **Sustainable housing/real estate markets**
  A forum jointly organized by the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group and the Brazilian chapter of the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) discussed guidelines and principles for a healthy and sustainable real estate sector.

During the week, the Executive Secretary held a number of high-level bilateral meetings with heads of State and Government, and ministers to discuss further cooperation in various UNECE areas of work.
Turning to the future, the Executive Secretary briefed the Geneva press corps on the outcome of the Conference from a UNECE perspective upon his return from Rio on Monday 25 June. According to the Executive Secretary, the outcome document contains a range of important provisions that recognize the role and contributions of the UN Regional Commissions to sustainable development and the green economy and invites them to play an active role in the follow-up, both at the regional level and across regions.

In particular, the outcome document refers to sustainable transport, water and sanitation, energy, forests and sustainable cities, all areas where UNECE is very active, through, inter alia, its work on green homes and climate neutral cities, the UNECE Water Convention, forests in a green economy, cleaner and safer transport and energy efficiency.

The outcome document also makes multiple references to the need to ensure the necessary information for evidence-based policy decisions. One of the most prominent initiatives in this area is the conceptual framework to measure sustainable development currently being developed by UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat and OECD, among others. This initiative aims at providing an agreed set of indicators to make international comparisons across countries and assess whether countries are on a sustainable path. UNECE will also be actively involved in the improvement of indicators to monitor progress towards MDGs, and in the development of sustainable development goals.

The Executive Secretary also noted that the conference saw the strong mobilization of civil society, and the growing engagement of the private sector. One example of the latter was the strong support from the private sector, foundations and a number of Governments to the Secretary-General’s Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, in which UNECE is actively engaged. Financial commitments announced at Rio+20 for this initiative amount to over USD 90 billion, mainly from the private sector.

An additional USD 175 billion were pledged by Multilateral Development Banks for sustainable transport, an area where UNECE is a key agency, providing the secretariat for over 50 transport related conventions and agreements. The Executive Secretary stressed that these figures are far above those pledged at the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development 10 years ago.

UNECE will now undertake an in-depth analysis of the outcome of Rio+20 and suggest follow-up actions that will be discussed with member States in the coming months.