

### Executive Secretary

### Visit of the Executive Secretary to Turkmenistan



The Executive Secretary with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov

The Executive Secretary visited Turkmenistan from 3-6 September. During his visit, he met with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Agriculture, Water Resources and Nature Protection Annageldi Yazmyradov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Economy, Foreign Investment, Finance and Monetary System Annamuhammet Gochiyev, and other high-level officials.



The Executive Secretary thanked the President for the contribution of Turkmenistan to the work of UNECE, highlighting its Vice-Chairmanship of the Commission, successful Chairmanship of SPECA and recent accession to the Water Convention. The two sides acknowledged the existing successful cooperation of Turkmenistan with the United Nations, notably its active role in the promotion of the MDGs and post-2015 development agenda.

The two sides also discussed the key areas of further cooperation which include energy, environmental protection, water management, transport and trade. The President reiterated the need for enhancing energy security and the development of energy transit routes, an area where UNECE could provide technical assistance and expertise.

The Executive Secretary expressed his appreciation for the support by Turkmenistan to the stabilization of Afghanistan through regional cooperation. He stressed the importance to further strengthen this cooperation after the withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan in 2014. The assistance offered by Turkmenistan in relation to the SPECA chairmanship of Afghanistan in 2014, in particular its offer to host the SPECA Economic Forum and Governing Council in Ashgabat, was highly appreciated.

#### Environment

The Executive Secretary expressed UNECE's full support to the priority given by the President to addressing the health effects of environmental pollution. In this regard, he suggested that Turkmenistan consider accession to UNECE's Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and to the Protocol on Water and Health.

He also invited Turkmenistan to ratify the amendments to articles 25 and 26 to the Water Convention to open it up for global accession. Minister of Foreign Affairs Meredov said that there were no obstacles to the ratification of these amendments by Turkmenistan. He also stressed that all problems related to water resources, in particular the Aral Sea which affects the whole region, should be resolved on the basis of international agreements. Mr. Alkalaj encouraged the Turkmen government to host an international conference on the Water Convention and transboundary water cooperation for countries in the subregion in 2014 or 2015. Such a conference could offer a platform for Turkmenistan to introduce non-Parties, such as Afghanistan or the Islamic Republic of Iran, to the cooperation framework under the Convention.

#### Energy and transport corridors

Foreign Minister Meredov reiterated Turkmenistan's need for sustainable solutions for the transit of energy resources to its partner countries, which would enable economic growth and sustainable development in the whole region. Beyond infrastructure, improved legal mechanisms would be needed, such as a global framing instrument. Turkmenistan wishes to discuss the issue of energy security in various fora, such as the OSCE Economic and Environment Forum and at ministerial level at the next Session of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy.

Mr. Meredov also highlighted the importance of the creation of new transport corridors, including railroads, to connect Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tajikistan, the Middle East and China. The new Turkmenbashi port on the Caspian Sea will contribute to improve transportation links.



Sven Alkalaj with Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet and Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Executive Secretary expressed UNECE's continued support to the development of transport corridors through Central Asia. While development banks provide loans for infrastructure development, UNECE technical assistance allows Central Asian countries to manage roads and railroads in a professional and efficient way, identify bottlenecks, harmonize transport rules and regulations, develop inter-modal connections, increase road

safety and reduce environmental pollution. In addition, the Executive Secretary welcomed the President's initiatives to hold a Road Safety event in September 2013, linked to the UN Road Safety initiative, and to popularize cycling in the country.

### Other areas of cooperation

The Executive Secretary also highlighted that UNECE offers increased cooperation on issues like innovation, education for sustainable development and public private partnerships.

He offered UNECE's support for economies in transition in their adaptation to the green economy, through, among others, the use of UNECE's green economy toolbox, and its legal frameworks to reduce emissions, promote sustainable production, resource efficiency, and equitable use of resources.

Minister for the Economy Gochiyev said that Turkmenistan would strive to better align its national statistics to international standards and strengthen cooperation with international organisations. He welcomed the offer from UNECE to support the global assessment of the Turkmen statistical system.



Sven Alkalaj with Annamuhammet Gochiyev, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for the Economy

In conclusion the two sides expressed their confidence in the continuation of constructive cooperation between Turkmenistan and UNECE. □

## Housing

Name of the Company: Quebec Wood Export Bureau  
 Model name: HS2  
 Dimensions: 4.88m x 6.10m, Area of 26 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Place of production: Province of Quebec, Canada  
 Cost: 10,000 \$CAD  
 Average time to build the house and number of persons involved: 2 days - 3 persons

International Organisation that have already used the model:  
 Canadian Red Cross used a related model  
 Other relevant information:  
 • Quick and easy to set up, dismantle or relocate  
 • Withstands winds up to 251 km/hour and major earthquakes  
 • Adaptable to several types of soil  
 • Flexible design  
 • Long-lasting



Name of the Company: PALMAKO AS  
 Model name: Ly - ELD18-3345  
 Dimensions: 330 x 453 cm (width x depth), height 297 cm, Area of 13,6 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Place of production: Estonia, Kavastu village, Luunja Vald, Tartumaa  
 Cost per unit: Starting in 2000  
 Average time to build the house and number of persons involved: 8 hours - 2 persons

International Organisation that have already used the model:  
 It has not yet been used  
 Other relevant information:  
 • House kit contains all the needed accessories for assembly  
 • Ready made wall-elements with wind protection plastic  
 • Wall thickness of 18 mm  
 • Insulation up to 70 mm  
 • Pressure-treated foundation joists



## UNECE displays Disaster Relief Homes in the park of the Palais des Nations

According to the United Nations [Special Rapporteur on adequate housing](#), worldwide, disasters are more prevalent and have more devastating effects than ever before. This trend is expected to continue as a result of climate change, rapid urbanization and population growth. However, compared to post-conflict preparation, there are few guidelines available to address issues related to the right to adequate housing in the wake of disasters.

In order to highlight the importance of this issue, UNECE is hosting an exhibition of temporary disaster relief housing from 10 September 2013 to 10 October 2013. The exhibited houses have been provided by Canada and Estonia and showcase some of the most recent developments in low-cost, quick-build, short-term housing for those displaced by disasters.

The exhibit was opened on 10 September by Elissa Golberg and Jüri Seilenthal, permanent representatives to the United Nations in Geneva of Canada and Estonia, respectively; as well as by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Sven Alkalaj, UNECE Executive Secretary, and Szilard Fricska, Senior Humanitarian Coordinator for UN-Habitat in Geneva.

During the opening, Mr. Tokayev noted that "The human and economic toll of disasters calls for urgent action. The loss of a home compounds the trauma of individuals affected and prolongs the process of recovery for the entire community. As we see here, the United Nations family is working closely with all partners to confront the range of technical, financial, legal and environmental aspects of recovery, including housing and land. This is both a strategic choice and a moral obligation to save lives and alleviate human suffering".

Mr. Alkalaj said: "This exhibition is meant to draw attention to the importance of reliable, safe and low-cost housing for people who have been forced from their homes by natural or man-made disasters. UNECE works hard to make sure our homes will be more secure, safe, energy-efficient, resilient and comfortable in the future. Our intergovernmental Committee on Housing and Land Management serves as a forum for the exchange of best practices and provides a platform for policy formulation and implementation in housing, spatial planning and land management. At the Ministerial Meeting on 8 October 2013, ministers from throughout the UNECE region will set policy and discuss how they can work together to address housing and land management challenges".

This exhibit marks the beginning of a number of important activities for UNECE's Housing and Land Management programme, including World Habitat Day (7 October), the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (7 and 9 October) and the Ministerial Meeting for Housing and Land Management (8 October). □



For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33525> or contact **Gulnara Roll** at: [gulnara.roll@unece.org](mailto:gulnara.roll@unece.org).  
 Not an official record - For information only