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**Statement by Mr. Ján Kubiš
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the UN/CEFACT 17th Plenary
Salle XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
7 July 2011**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today at the 17th UN/CEFACT Plenary. UN/CEFACT is one of UNECE's key intergovernmental bodies supporting economic integration within the UNECE region and globally. This is vitally important in a time of global economic uncertainty and I very much appreciate your efforts in this area.

As many of you know, I have taken a keen interest in following the work of UN/CEFACT in implementing the recommendations of UNECE's Executive Committee (EXCOM). I am happy to see the progress made to date, including the adoption of procedures to obtain support from member States before undertaking new projects, the increased transparency on the project website, the greater availability of project documents and information in all three official UNECE languages, and the enhanced cooperation and clarity of roles between the secretariat and the working party.

Following EXCOM recommendations, I am also happy to see the increased participation of our transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT and the enhanced delivery of capacity building by the secretariat. This was noted with satisfaction by EXCOM at its December 2010 meeting, and they requested that the work be continued and strengthened. UN/CEFACT has an important role to play in supporting this work, both through the development of new recommendations and standards and, importantly, by developing implementation guidelines for such instruments.

In this regard, I would like to inform you that the secretariat's UN Network of Experts (UNNEXT) to support trade facilitation implementation, developed in association with UNESCAP, is making great progress in Central Asia and we intend to expand this to all five UN Regional Commission over the coming years. Indeed, the five UN RCs will increasingly coordinate their efforts in trade facilitation implementation and will jointly organise a conference on future directions for Single Window and International Supply Chains in December this year. We see this and related work as an important contribution to the integration of developing and transition economies into the global economy.

I am aware that the focus of this Plenary is on the restructuring proposals to streamline the UN/CEFACT management structure and deliver outputs in a more timely manner. These are positive goals and are consistent with the above-mentioned recommendations of EXCOM. I wish you every success in your deliberation on these proposals.

I also understand that a set of new Bureau Vice Chairs will be elected tomorrow under the revised structure. I see this as a great opportunity to continue and indeed strengthen the increased cooperation between secretariat and UN/CEFACT and I call on the soon-to-be-elected new Vice Chairs to set this as one of their priorities. I firmly believe that working together we can effectively address the needs and requirements of member States in a timely and concrete manner. The UN rules and structure strengthen the work of UN/CEFACT by providing the framework, transparency and accountability necessary for the global acceptance of your standards. I urge you to make full use of the secretariat resources available to you. We are there to support you and help you get the job done within this globally recognised UN Framework.

In closing, I wish you a very successful meeting and I look forward to reviewing the outcomes.
