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**Opening Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Sven ALKALAJ**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at**

**the Roundtable on Public-Private Partnerships:  
Partnering with the Private Sector in International Organisations**

**Geneva, 4 December 2012**

Distinguished colleagues,  
ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this Roundtable on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with the aim of sharing information among Geneva-based UN agencies on our respective experiences in partnering with the private sector.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands and his team at the Permanent Mission in Geneva for promoting this initiative, and for the considerable support that the Government of the Netherlands provides to the UNECE work on Public-Private Partnerships.

As you know, Public-Private Partnerships is one of the pillars of our work at UNECE. Earlier this year the member States established the International PPP Centre of Excellence at UNECE with a view to developing and disseminating best practice in PPPs across the globe.

I have just returned from Manila, where I signed a long-term agreement with the Minister of Health of the Philippines, to promote cooperation in PPPs and to establish a PPP Specialist Centre on Health, as part of the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence. Other countries are lining up to establish their own Specialist Centres with a view to identifying excellence in different sectors and applying the PPP approach as a tool to attract private capital into infrastructure investment.

Our experience shows that partnering with the private sector is crucial in our work as international civil servants. The private sector has the technical knowledge, case studies and a rich experience of undertaking PPPs around the world. It is also highly motivated to develop partnerships with the UN, and to bring innovative ideas to the discussion on how to assist the UN and its Member States in addressing some of mankind's greatest challenges: poverty alleviation, climate change mitigation, sustainable development, innovation.

The purpose of this meeting is to create an informal network within the international community in Geneva, to foster this dialogue. I encourage you to create this network and to nurture it over the coming months so that it can become a permanent platform for exchanging information on innovative and creative ways to develop partnerships with the private sector. I wish this first meeting great success.

Thank you for your attention.