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Opening Statement

by

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United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

**the Special Session on Public-Private Partnerships:
“Exploring PPP options to renovate the Palais des Nations:
A review of best practices and their applicability for the Palais des Nations”**

Geneva, 6 December 2012

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this special session on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and more specifically on the role of PPPs in building refurbishment, with a special focus on the applicability of the PPP approach to the renovation of the Palais des Nations.

As you know, Public-Private Partnerships is one of the pillars of our work at UNECE. I have just come back 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 UNECE's International PPP Centre of Excellence.

PPPs are becoming a tool that is synonymous with infrastructure development in the 21st century and I would like to see them promoted by UNECE as a tangible manifestation of the relevance of our work for our member States.

We are here today to avail ourselves of UNECE's expertise in PPPs and to provide advice to our colleagues from UNOG on how the PPP approach has been used in various countries in the renovation of public buildings, and how it can be applied to the specific needs of the Palais des Nations.

I was very honoured by the request and I agreed without hesitation to this cooperation with UNOG and the Strategic Heritage Plan team in the spirit of "Delivering as One" to explore the full potential of PPPs as a procuring mechanism for the renovation of the Palais des Nations.

The Palais des Nations is much more than a prestigious building. It is a living organism that provides a multitude of services to its users and clients: from member States to UN staff, NGOs and the business community.

And this is precisely the expertise that PPPs can bring to the table, renovation being only one aspect of a PPP project. It is the services provided by the private partner after the renovation and over the duration of the PPP project, and the innovation that the private partner introduces in the delivery of these services that set PPPs apart from traditional procurement.

Member States will soon need to decide whether they want to continue using the traditional approach for procuring major UN projects, or take advantage of the PPP approach as an efficient, cost effective, and innovative procurement mechanism to renovate this prestigious palace.

Ladies and gentlemen,
UNECE stands ready to work with UNOG and to ensure that Member States are in the position to make informed decision-making on the best possible options for renovating our beautiful Palais des Nations.

Thank you for your attention.