

Remarks of the Executive Secretary of UNECE at the Executive Committee's 50th meeting

17 February 2012

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and a privilege for me to join the United Nations as Executive Secretary of UNECE. Thank you for your presence here today. I thank also the EXCOM Chairman, Ambassador Zvekic, for his special invitation that went out to ambassadors of UNECE member States.

In these few days since I took over my position, I have been able to familiarize myself with the current work and agenda of UNECE. I have also familiarized myself with the Terms of Reference of EXCOM, as well as of the Commission. We have already had a meeting of the EXCOM bureau last week and it was my pleasure to start to work with the Chairman and the Vice-chairs very soon after my arrival. I thank them for their warm welcome and their commitment, dedication and support to UNECE.

In my previous experience in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as ambassador and most recently as Foreign Minister, I have dealt with political and economic issues at the national, regional, European, and international levels, gaining particular experience in enhancing regional cooperation amongst countries in the Western Balkans as well as the Eastern European and the CIS countries. I also spent some time in the private sector as Managing Director of a multinational engineering company.

I will use my experience, knowledge and personal contacts to push for the strengthening of economic cooperation and integration of the UNECE region.

I will be steering this organization in line with the Secretary-General's priorities for the next five years. I will also focus on building consensus and partnerships among various actors and stakeholders at all levels in order to achieve the goals of UNECE.

I realize that I come to UNECE at a time when the review of UNECE reform is already underway. As you know, on our agenda today we will continue with the review of the Transport subprogramme. I believe that it is a healthy sign that member States closely follow and are very much involved in the work of UNECE. I will strive to ensure that this process is completed in an effective manner and to the satisfaction of our member States. I know many of you expect me to share my vision on the future of UNECE, but it would be a little bit premature to come up with a vision only after a few days here, considering that UNECE is such a diverse programme. However, together, let us make a maximum use of this review process to make UNECE even more relevant, up-to-date and focused, for the benefit of its clients, be it member States or the general public.

I have already learned that UNECE produces a great deal of concrete outputs that are practical and useful to society at large. Yet UNECE is still little known. We at the

secretariat will therefore work on preparing a communication strategy, including new ways of engaging member States that will aim to improve this situation.

To do all that I have just mentioned, we need to work together – both the secretariat and the member States. I therefore count on your full support and guidance. I want to assure you that in the secretariat we will spare no effort or time to work closely with member States in order to achieve our goals. It is our main task to implement our work programme in close collaboration with you, as we in the secretariat are here to serve member States.

Thank you for your kind words and for this very warm welcome. I look forward to working closely with you all.
