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Statement

by

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United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

**the Joint UNECE-International Trade Centre (ITC) Panel Session:
“Addressing non-tariff barriers to trade: from business concern to policy action”,
of the Astana Economic Forum**

Astana, Kazakhstan, 22 May 2013

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the immense pleasure to welcome you to today's panel session "Addressing non-tariff barriers to trade: From business concern to policy action". This panel session has been organized jointly by the International Trade Centre and my organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. It is the culmination of almost two years of cooperation and our work together, based upon the strengths of our respective organizations, in order to deliver better quality and more comprehensive support to our member States, in particular to Kazakhstan.

During this session, we will report on the results of a recent joint ITC-UNECE study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade conducted in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is, on the one hand, a big economic power within Central Asia, and, on the other hand, is a land-locked country isolated from global markets. Therefore, it is critical to provide it with the best possible trading environment in order to support its integration into the global economic system and to reap the benefits of participating in international supply chains.

Within this study, the ECE looked into trade facilitation, standardization and regulatory issues, while the ITC carried out a survey among traders on the problems they encounter when participating in international trade. These two parts complement each other, and provide a very interesting and dynamic picture of

Kazakhstan. I am sure that our today's presentations and discussions will give interesting insight into how trade can be further enhanced in Kazakhstan.

The panel session will also make suggestions on how to follow-up on the recommendations contained in the report.

I would like to invite all partners and interested parties to support the efforts of Kazakhstan as it endeavours to fully benefit from participation in regional and global supply chains.

Now, let me declare the Panel Session formally open and wish you fruitful deliberations on the way forward.

Thank you.
