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**Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Sven ALKALAJ**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

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

**at**

**the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA Governing Council**

**Agenda item 9**

**Cooperation between SPECA and partner organizations and institutions**

**Almaty, 22 November 2013**

Mr. Chairperson, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last session of the Governing Council the UNECE has continued to work closely with a number of its partners within and outside of the UN family.

The adoption of the document “The future we want” by the Rio+20 conference provided a strong momentum to ongoing cooperation between UNECE, UNESCAP and UNEP. The latter is playing a key role in the implementation of Rio+20 but at the same time the outcome document assigns important tasks to the Regional Commissions too, in particular in the field of invigorating regional cooperation. UNECE and UNEP are jointly supporting efforts to strengthen the Inter-State Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD), which is established to play a central role in the implementation of Rio+20 at the regional level. Yesterday participants of the Economic Forum heard a summary by the Head of Delegation of Tajikistan on the discussion of a report by the Task Force of the Scientific Information Center of ICSD, which has been jointly supported by UNECE and UNEP. Based on the recommendations of this report and in light of the outcome of discussions by the High-Level Segment of the Economic Forum on regional aspects of Rio+20 and the post-2015 development agenda, we expect the cooperation between UNECE, UNESCAP and UNEP to continue to be intensive and close.

An important pre-condition of substantive progress in regional cooperation in such areas as sustainable development, climate change action, water resources management or disaster risk reduction is a dramatic improvement in information management both at the national and regional level. The

UNECE is working closely with such important donors as the World Bank, GIZ, SDC and UNEP on improving regional information management in the above areas.

If you look through the progress report, you will find that SPECA, through its various Project Working Groups works closely with a great number of partners and donors. Let me just mention here the most important bilateral donors, such as the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Israel, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, DFID, USAID, multilateral donors like the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility, the European Union, ADB, the Eurasian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, and partner organizations like the WTO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ILO, OSCE, EurAsEC or the Eurasian Economic Commission.

The UNECE continues to work closely with the most important Central Asian regional organization, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. After the rotation of the Chairmanship from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan, a new work program is being discussed and agreed upon. It focuses on supporting implementation of the Third Aral Sea Basin Program through intensive donor coordination, further institutional and legal strengthening of IFAS, capacity building on international water law and dam safety. Work with the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) is likely to receive new momentum with the possible continuation of work on water quality.

Speakers at the High-Level Segment of the SPECA Economic Forum underlined the importance of regional cooperation in the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20 and its potential

role in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The UNECE and ESCAP plan to continue the close cooperation with their partners in the above areas, among others within the SPECA framework.

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