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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 sixth session of the Committee on Trade**

**Geneva, 10-12 February 2014, 10 a.m.**

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants and colleagues,

I am pleased to open the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the ECE Committee on Trade.

This session is very important for many reasons.

First of all, you will have a number of important and substantive discussions. For example, you will have before you a study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Tajikistan and this afternoon, Minister Rahimzoda of Tajikistan will report on the conclusions of the Government's review of the recommendations from the report.

The Committee will also have a very interesting discussion on current procedural and regulatory issues in the Balkans and the Caucasus and we hope that you will share experiences from your own countries.

Then, on Wednesday morning, you will be holding discussions that will contribute to decisions on the future of the Committee on Trade.

As you may know, UNECE member States carried out a Review of the organization's work in 2011 and 2012 that was completed by the adoption of a set of decisions at the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission in April 2013.

One decision by member States, as a result of the Review, was to have the sessions of the Committee on Trade and the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration held back-to-back and this is what is happening this week. Your Committee session will close at 1 pm on Wednesday after which we shall move on to the session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration.

Both Committees will have a segment on future work, and, as part of that, possible synergies. This, again, is a request coming from the Review. The outcome of this discussion on synergies will be reported to the delegations attending the following session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration who will be addressing the same topic on Friday.

Then, the results of both of these discussions, as well as those from a questionnaire that the secretariat will distribute at the beginning of March, will form the basis of a paper that the secretariat will be preparing for the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) before the summer. This draft paper will be used by the EXCOM to review the situation and decide on whether or not to merge the two Committees.

I am sure that your deliberations on the various issues I mentioned will create an excellent basis for the future work of the ECE in the trade area. I look forward to hearing the results of your discussions and wish you a very fruitful session.