Salutations …..

I would like to echo the comments of our Executive Secretary that these are important times for our work in trade facilitation and security. The technical work undertaken in this area is of vital importance. In addition, trade facilitation and security have gained significant importance in the trade policy arena and this generates new opportunities to advance the implementation of some of our key instruments. As I have said many times before, trade facilitation and security standards, recommendations and tools only have value when they are actually implemented, and this is the real challenge facing us today.

I do not intend to say too much at this stage about the broad range of work undertaken by UNECE in the trade security area, as several of our initiatives, such as the Reference Model for Trade Security, the UNeDocs project for both paper and advance digital information, our Single Window project and our work on security standards, will be profiled during the meeting itself.

However, I would like to emphasise that we have an extensive work programme in this area that is detailed in our Strategic Action Plan for 2003-05, copies of which are available on our website and at the back of the room. We strongly encourage the use of existing instruments in addressing security issues wherever possible and believe that this is a better approach than reinventing the proverbial wheel.

It is interesting to note that security has, in fact, generated significant new interest in some of our more mature products such as the UN Layout Key and UN/EDIFACT. Essentially, we have found a resurgence of interest in the importance of international documentary and electronic standards for the transfer of information along the supply chain and we are capitalising on this in the development and implement of our UNeDocs project.

We are also finding a far greater integration in the application of our products; much of this spurred on by the security agenda and the increased emphasis on advance information. For example, our UMM modelling methodology is being applied for the computerisation of the TIR procedure administered by the UNECE Transport Division and we are also looking at the potential application of our work on UNeDocs. Much of this work involves close co-operation between the UNECE Trade and Transport Divisions and we see this as a micro model for the overall cooperation and harmonisation of the work of the various international agencies in trade facilitation and security.
I am looking forward to your deliberations on the development of a security management standard, as I believe that this is an important move in the right direction. I hope that we will have active participation in this work and I warmly invite you to participate in our overall trade facilitation and security standards development work, most of which takes place through working groups established under the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and electronic business (UN/CEFACT). These working groups are open to participation from all countries and organisations recognised by ECOSOC and represent an excellent opportunity for direct involvement in the standards development work.

In closing, I commit the resources of the UNECE Trade and Timber Division to working closely with other relevant organisation in this work. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and support and I offer all our tools, standards and Recommendations as a positive contribution to the overall work in establishing a properly facilitated and secure trading environment.