1. On 13/14 November 2003, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) hosted a meeting on trade security and trade facilitation. The meeting provided the opportunity for all stakeholders to express their views on the various security related initiatives currently underway. Different approaches (legislative, compliance, certification, partnership) were discussed and the need to balance security and facilitation in all of these approaches was emphasised to ensure that economic growth and stability were not undermined in the process. The meeting provided the opportunity to address the following topics:

- The need to protect legitimate trade from the risk of terrorism;
- The need for Governments, international organizations and the business community to work together, in order to minimize the cost of security and make the international trading system safer;
- The need for a balance between trade facilitation and new security measures;
- The need for a holistic approach to the security of international supply chains;
- The need to implement existing standards which enhance both security and trade facilitation,
- The need to work for a broad-based, clear, non-discriminatory and auditable international standard covering the security of international trade.

2. The platform of discussion at the meeting was a logical follow-up to the previous meeting in February 2003 and UNECE’s International Forum on Trade Facilitation in May 2003. One of the highlights in this discussion was the necessary balance between trade facilitation policy and the new security initiatives. The participants emphasized the gravity of the security risks to international trade, and consequently to economic growth and development. At the same time, all of them underlined the need to support legitimate trade through trade facilitation.

3. The meeting provided an opportunity to formulate a strong message towards a collaborative approach by all Governments, international organizations and the business community, in order to ensure more efficiency and effectiveness in providing security in the international trading system.

4. The meeting stressed the importance of specific techniques, which would lead to more security in international trade, such as risk analysis and risk management, based on sharing information and advance submission of information to the relevant control bodies. Partnerships between the private sector and official control bodies, especially Customs, are essential. It was stated that while it is important to encourage compliance and compliant traders, it is even more important to reinforce trust and exchange of information between the two groups of actors, which can be the basis of a secure international trading system.

5. The participants expressed their recognition of the importance of the implementation of existing or currently developed international instruments, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention of the WCO, the Unique Consignment Reference, the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents, United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDED), and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS code) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Such instruments will reinforce the efforts of individual countries to achieve more security in their
foreign trade. A number of speakers highlighted multilaterally developed instruments and initiatives for the advance submission of trade and transport information, such as the Advance Cargo Information (ACI) Guidelines of the WCO, the UNeDocs project of UNECE, and the security elements in the TIR convention.

6. The meeting stressed that in order for the system to be efficient, and avoid the risk of exclusion of some countries and smaller enterprises, more attention and resources have to be dedicated to **technical assistance and capacity building**.

7. Consistent with UNECE’s work on the Enhancement of Trade Facilitation and Security (Strategic Action Plan 2003-2005, item 5.1.1.2) as approved by the Committee on Trade Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED), the participants from administration, trade and transport indicated a desire to intensify their work with UNECE in identifying and consolidating their overall approach to security and facilitation by:

   a) Reviewing existing UNECE instruments from a security perspective.
   b) Identifying and/or including all areas relevant to the security of international trade.
   c) Identifying specific components that would benefit from the development of international recommendations, best practice, or standards, as appropriate.
   d) Involving active participation of administrations, trade and transport in the development of such instruments.
   e) Determining where and how the above instruments could be implemented internationally.
   f) Ensuring that the above instruments enhance trade facilitation and do not disadvantage transition and developing economies.

8. The participants emphasised that this work should be consistent with and complementary to the work already underway in other forums such as the WCO Task Force on Security and Facilitation. The results of this work should be fed into the Global Facilitation Partnership (www.gfptt.org).

9. The importance of coherence by all these initiatives was emphasised; implementation of existing recommendations, standards and conventions was stressed by the participants; and, importantly, the need for adequate capacity-building and technical assistance in developing and transition economies was underlined.

10. The participants stressed that the approach to security implementation should be proportional to the risk. While the need for advance information was recognized, participants stated that the adoption of an on-line only approach could create a trade divide. Concerns were expressed by developing countries on the potential for security initiatives to reduce their competitiveness in international trade.

11. Participants in the meeting were invited to take an active role and support this work.