

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend to you the warm greetings of our Executive Secretary Mr. Christian Friis Bach and of our Director Virginia Cram-Martos.

It is a pleasure for the UNECE to organizing this event with so many excellent colleagues from the UN family, and to partner with key standards organizations to raise awareness and discuss solutions to the challenges that will encounter our member states in implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

These topics will also play an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is the driving force of our activities in the United Nations.

For the one of you that are not familiar with the work and role of the organization I represent, UNECE that is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.

Its aim is to facilitate greater economic integration and cooperation among its member countries and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity.

UNECE is the only UNRC that develop global standards in various areas,such as: Trade, Transport, Energy, Environment and Housing.

In our Division, through the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Economic Business, UN/CEFACT, we develop standards and recommendations aimed to facilitate global trade along the all supply chain.

Without reliable standards, international trade as a driver of growth, technological advance and knowledge and technology transfer, is simply unimaginable.

Internationally recognized recommendations, standards and tools play a crucial role in the effective implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

One such tool is the United Nations Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide that we will discuss more in details in the first part of this event.

National and international standards bodies and quality infrastructure institutions have a key role to play in trade and trade facilitation and in particular to support the development of standards and quality management institutions in low and middle-income countries.

With these thoughts, I would like to conclude, and wish the meeting every success.