



Executive Secretary
Under-Secretary-General

Opening statement

by

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at the

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PPP FORUM



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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the **eighth edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum**. I wish to thank the Government of Türkiye – in particular, **Mr. İbrahim Şenel**, President of Strategy and Budget at the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye – for hosting this year’s Forum.

It is very encouraging to see so many PPP experts from all over the world join us in person and online. Over the past seven years, the UNECE Forum has established itself as an **annual flagship event** for the international PPP community to exchange ideas and address some of the current and emerging challenges and opportunities in sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

This week, we are also coming together amid multiple sources of uncertainty. The war in our region continues to create untold suffering, while undermining the very foundations of sustainable development. The challenges ahead are significant, as we collectively grapple with the complex interplay between economic progress, environmental preservation, and social equality – the interplay that is also at the very heart of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs.

The theme of this year’s Forum – **“Accelerating the SDGs and Climate Action”** – combines very topical issues that are at the top of the agenda of our member States, and also the UNECE secretariat.



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Accelerating the SDGs remains critical. The latest data on SDG progress show that with the current pace of implementation, the UNECE region will only achieve 20 of the 169 targets by 2030, which represent 17 percent of measurable targets. When looking at PPPs and infrastructure development required to achieve the SDGs, the overall picture remains concerning: progress towards **Goal 9.1 on infrastructure development** is on an inverse trend, while progress to achieve **Goal 17.17 on PPPs** needs to be considerably accelerated.

Never before has the need for high-quality, green, resilient, circular, inclusive and fiscally sustainable infrastructure, with people as the main beneficiaries, been so important to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Strong **climate action** is most critical, with multiple impacts across different SDGs. A far-reaching transformation is urgently needed before we reach dangerous, irreversible tipping points. The latest data shows that the world is not on track to meet targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we still fail to get the basic incentives for behaviour change in place, while fossil fuel subsidies continue to increase.

I am happy to see that you have identified **economic recovery, climate resilience** and the **rebuilding of communities** ravaged by natural disasters and armed conflicts as priority topics for the wider PPP community. I am also pleased to see UNECE contributing to these priority topics by providing a multistakeholder platform for discussion, taking a human-rights based approach, and more concretely, by developing PPP standards, practical guides and policy recommendations for governments with vulnerable groups in mind. I am convinced that the PPP practical tools that you are



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producing – on **digital transformation, green procurement, sustainable finance, gender equality and women empowerment, stakeholder engagement, climate resilient infrastructure, off-grid renewable energy, and small-scale PPPs** – will have the same impact as some of those developed previously, including the **PIERS methodology** and the recently published UNECE guidelines on the delivery of **PPP projects for sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction**.

The **PIERS methodology** has become our “crown jewel”. Since its launch in 2022, PIERS has been applied to over 220 projects across 50 countries and in more than 20 difference sectors, demonstrating its practicality. Showcasing projects at our annual Forums has become a very practical way to promote this tool. Over the next three days, 12 of the 38 projects submitted to UNECE in 2024 will be showcased. In their diversity, they have one common characteristic: they have all been self-assessed using PIERS to exalt their SDG credentials.

Over the coming months, and in close cooperation with the **Economic Commission for Africa** and the **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**, UNECE will assist 6 Member States to evaluate at least 40 PPP and infrastructure projects using the PIERS methodology.

Due to the demand for support from member States in the use of PIERS, UNECE has developed a robust **PIERS programme** of assistance, aimed at enhancing the rigour and credibility of the evaluations while also saving time. In addition, the **PIERS multi-language online platform** has been launched to further digitize the evaluation process and make it more efficient. The PIERS programme and platform, which will soon be



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supplemented by the **PIERS interactive e-training module**, will be presented at this Forum. I encourage you all to make use of these free tools for maximum impact.

I also invite you to look beyond the mere economic value of infrastructure projects, and to consider, evaluate and quantify the wider value of PPPs and infrastructure projects for communities and the environment. PIERS can provide a solid platform to assess the broader socioeconomic and environmental benefits of infrastructure projects. I firmly believe that, by demonstrating these wider benefits, we can inspire policy makers to replicate these projects in their own countries and cities.

Let me conclude by stressing the importance of partnerships to provide a better service to our member States. I am delighted to see our many international partners: the Regional Director of the UN Development Cooperation Office for Europe and Central Asia, UN Resident Coordinators, UN special rapporteurs, representatives from UN Regional Commissions, members of the UN family and the multilateral development banks are all here, to contribute their knowledge and expertise at the Forum.

Sustainable development is a common goal that we cannot achieve in isolation. As the international community is preparing for the **Summit of the Future**, and its highly anticipated **Pact of the Future**, our common objective is to strengthen partnerships for the SDGs. We are now beyond the halfway point to the 2030 Agenda. We need to make an extra effort to seize the moment, get all hands on deck, and join forces to move faster to deliver the SDGs for people and the planet.

I wish you a successful Forum and look forward to the outcome of your deliberations.