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**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
Executive Committee meeting, 18 October 2011**

**with**

**United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**

**Welcome remarks by  
Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary**

- We cordially welcome the Secretary-General here today. This is the first time a United Nations Secretary-General meets with UNECE and we are honored and grateful for this strong sign of support in the wake of your second term of duty.
- You are coming at an auspicious time - today we start to review the 2005 reform with a view to drawing conclusions on our future work priorities, thus reconfirming, like in the past, our relevance to the member States.
- We are in many ways different from any other part of the United Nations - we do not shuffle papers or declarations nor do we produce voluminous general reports to catch dust on the shelves. Our publications are among the organization's best sellers creating valuable income for the United Nations.
- We help integrate our pan-european area, we build a coherent regional economic space, we foster economic cooperation in the european and trans-atlantic region and beyond.
- We do this by producing norms, standards, regulations, policy recommendations, guides and best practices that work for the real economy and for sustainable development. We are indeed a key organization for achieving sustainable development goals.
- Our products are used not only in our region but beyond. We have some unique legal instruments - conventions and agreements, for example in the area of transport, environment or trade facilitation. We set the tune and often truly global benchmarks in many other areas, like statistics, energy efficiency, housing forestry or PPP. And I could continue with many other specific examples.

- We are therefore a knowledge-based organization with invaluable high-quality specialized experts, not just generalists. Yet, in this time of economic crisis and financial austerity we managed to respond to the call of the Secretary-General to reduce our budget by 3 %. We had to cut posts to achieve this. Our share in the staffing of the secretariat is 2%. Yet, with 7 posts abolished, our share in the post cuts for the coming biennium budget is 5%. And if we take into account that the net reduction of staff in the budget proposal is 44 posts, our share in this is 16 %.
- Secretary-General, once again, welcome. We look forward to your statement and guidance.

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