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**Statement by Mr. Ján Kubiš
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the 17th Azerbaijan International Exhibition and Conference
Telecommunications and Information Technologies (BAKUTEL)**

Baku, Azerbaijan, 23-26 November 2011

Your Excellency Professor Ali Abbasov, Minister of Communications and Information Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan]

Dr. Hamadoun Touré, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure to be with you today at this important International Exhibition and Conference. Information and communication technologies play an important role in sustaining competitiveness in modern economies, being a factor of economic dynamism and job creation in many countries.

ICT are deeply embedded in our modern societies, opening a wide range of possibilities for the exchange and processing of information. New forms of collaboration are being developed thanks to ICT. International cooperation is required to tap this potential, developing contacts, facilitating understanding and identifying the opportunities where collaboration is possible. The traditional International Exhibition and Conference Bakutel has established itself as an important international meeting that facilitates exchanges among a wide community of experts and policy makers on ICT-related issues.

Within the context of this prestigious event, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is organising, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan the International Conference "Knowledge-based Development and Innovative Entrepreneurship", which will start in the morning of 24 November. I would like to take this occasion and thank the Government of Azerbaijan for taking the initiative of hosting this international conference and for the excellent cooperation with the

Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies in its preparation. There is a close link between ICT, innovation and entrepreneurship and they will all be in the focus of the Conference. The sector continually generates new products and services. In addition, the use of ICT makes possible new business models that can shake up entire industries. The whole global competitive landscape is being radically transformed as ICT facilitates access to world markets to new producers in different geographies.

A well-developed ICT infrastructure is an important component of a favourable business environment. The public sector has an important role in developing this infrastructure, in close collaboration with the private sector. In the Conference, we will also hear about how this collaboration can be structured in the form of public-private partnerships (PPP) that share risks and pool resources between both sectors. The UNECE is globally recognized as a source of knowledge on PPP. We are now preparing a new initiative – establishing an International PPP Centre of Excellence in Geneva – which will support the dissemination of best practice in this area.

Besides this "hard" infrastructure, the development of ICT gives rise to a variety of legal and regulatory issues - the "soft" infrastructure - that need to be addressed to deliver efficient outcomes. These include, for example, the validity of electronic methods of contracting and the security risks associated with them, concerns over cybercrime and the ability to protect intellectual property rights online. UNECE has developed guidelines on these questions and seeks to increase awareness among policy-makers of these issues and the policy options available to them.

Let me stress that UNECE assigns great importance to the support to innovation and knowledge-based development in its member States. We have recently developed a new initiative in this area, the undertaking of national Innovation Performance Reviews in requesting countries. This policy advisory service aims to review critically the national innovation system and come up with concrete policy recommendations for stimulating innovation activity in the country and enhancing its innovation capacity.

I would like to conclude by stressing the significance of ICT in the efforts to improve economic performance, increase economic dynamism and innovation and facilitate international cooperation. This underlines the importance of Bakutel, which is well established as the major ICT event in the region.

With this I would like to wish you a successful outcome of the Bakutel International Exhibition and Conference.