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## **Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Sven ALKALAJ**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe**

**at**

**the Ministerial Luncheon on  
Tackling Water Risks to Ensure a Sustainable Future**

**Wednesday, 25 September 2013, 1:15-3:00 p.m.  
UN Headquarters, South Terrace Dining Room**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe—UNECE—coordinated the thematic consultations on water resources management, including the organization of a global meeting, at the beginning of the year. These consultations reflected on the importance of water for all dimensions of sustainable development and the need for a dedicated water goal. Water for peace was also very high on the agenda.

Sixty per cent of global freshwater flow is in the basins of transboundary rivers and lakes, where 40 per cent of the world's population live. We know also that demand for water will continue to grow and further strain relations between upstream and downstream countries.

Cooperation on water resources shared by more than one country is therefore vital for peace and stability, economic growth and sustainable development. Water must therefore be a catalyst for cooperation and not a source of conflict. Transboundary water cooperation is needed in the post-2015 development agenda and this was reflected in the statements of many members of the Open Working Group.

As Executive Secretary of UNECE it is my honour to provide the secretariat for the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Rivers and International Lakes. For over 20 years this treaty has provided a sound legal framework and an active intergovernmental platform for the promotion of

cooperation and the sustainable management of water resources in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

It is my pleasure to inform you, Excellencies, that the Convention has turned into a global treaty that will allow accession by all Member States, following the entry into force of an amendment last February. Coincidentally, the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, adopted by the General

Assembly, is about to enter into force. These two complementary treaties will provide a comprehensive global framework for water cooperation that I encourage Member States to use for the benefit of all.