



BUILDING BACK BETTER

**Shared solutions as a critical tool for Sustainable Development
in the era of COVID-19**

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE | 2 NOVEMBER 2020 | 15:30-17:30 | GENEVA

Opening notes for the Executive Secretary at 15:30 h on 2 November

Online Webex meeting, with the connection details in a separate email.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen

Fifty years ago, UNECE initiated a series of “Meetings of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies” under the Commission. Thirty years ago, member States saw that they needed more intergovernmental support. A Working Party on Technical Harmonization was thus established. Today, we call it the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policy, where your valuable work continues providing all member States with recommendations and tools to streamline and harmonize standardization through intergovernmental cooperation.

Our Jubilee Anniversary Conference highlights our significant achievement: some 30 recommendations, still in active use all over the world. Let me just name one of the most recent great accomplishments, the UNECE Portal on Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals, which now covers SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13. This free tool helps users to identify standards that support Sustainable Development Goals. Case studies explain how standards have successfully enhanced sustainability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how vulnerable the world is, despite the ever-increasing connectivity and interdependencies.

Today’s conference will give further impetus for the continued intergovernmental cooperation in standardization and regulatory cooperation in many areas: Gender-Responsive Standards, risk management, education in standardization or the circular economy.

We need to continue working every day to ensure a good and prosperous future for us all – among others, through internationally agreed standards and good cooperation between Governments, the private sector and the civil society. This is even more important today, as we jointly strive to build back better after – or even during – the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Let me congratulate all member States and partner organizations for this memorable milestone in our joint work, and wish you a very successful and interesting jubilee anniversary conference.

Thank you.