



NATIONS UNIES

COMMISSION ÉCONOMIQUE
POUR L'EUROPE

ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫЕ НАЦИИ

ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ
КОМИССИЯ

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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

**At the opening of the sixth session of the UNECE
Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration**

Geneva, 30 November 2011

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure to be with you today at the opening of the sixth session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration. We are now in the process of reviewing the 2005 ECE reform, which resulted in the creation of this Committee. It is now time to look back and discuss our achievements over the last five years, as well as the challenges we have faced and come up with a vision as to how we can make our future work still more relevant and efficient. I believe that this Committee can be proud of what has been done in a short period of time, including in areas of activity which were until recently new to the UNECE. At the same time we have to ensure that our future work will continue to meet the changing needs of our member States and this should be our primary concern.

In the current economic climate, there is no doubt that the issues considered by the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration remain highly relevant. The UNECE economies need to recover their dynamism, ensuring that the current drive for austerity does not neglect the factors that support long-term, sustainable economic growth. Innovation remains an imperative for modern economies to ensure prosperity in an increasingly competitive global landscape. The collaboration between the public and private sector underpins many of the innovation policy instruments and is essential to develop a common vision for the future that provides an appropriate foundation for strategic decisions. In a situation in which real and perceived economic risks have increased and financial constraints have hardened, this collaboration becomes even more important to mobilise the necessary resources to support innovation and to develop an infrastructure that contributes to competitiveness.

International cooperation facilitates the exchange of policy experiences and good practices but also the understanding of the global context in which innovation takes place and of the cross-border issues that could be addressed through collaborative efforts. It also serves to develop networks through which information circulates, including the identification of opportunities for cross-border investment.

The integration of our region is based on shared prosperity. The work under the Committee has a special focus on countries with economies in transition, thus supporting their efforts to modernize their economies, strengthen their competitiveness and sources of economic growth and develop closer economic ties with other member States and their integration into the global economy. Capacity-building activities and other technical cooperation services, which have played an increasingly prominent role in the programme of work of this Committee, make a practical contribution to advance these aims. Further integration is a source of economic resilience and business opportunities that brings benefits through the whole UNECE region.

Over the next two days we will hear about two major projects undertaken under the Committee: the Innovation Performance Review of Kazakhstan which is part of a series of such projects, and the UNECE PPP Initiative. In both cases, international best practices and experiences inform the assessment of national situations to provide policy advisory services that can be followed up by capacity-building activities.

Translating our work into concrete actions for the benefit of all our member States is our ultimate aim. I look forward to the contributions that the Committee will make to closer integration and economic prosperity in the region in the future.

With this I would like to wish you a successful outcome of this Session.