



Executive Secretary
Under-Secretary-General

Opening statement

by

Ms. Tatiana Molcean
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at the

Seventh session of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships

30 November 2023, 10:00 CET, Salle XXIV





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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the seventh session of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships.

Infrastructure is crucial to social and economic development for our citizens. **Green, climate resilient, circular, inclusive and fiscally sustainable infrastructure**, with people as the main beneficiaries, is also key to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, not to mention rebuilding communities ravaged by natural disasters and armed conflicts. In recent years, such events have created large-scale destruction to key infrastructure and jeopardized access to basic public services for millions of people in the UNECE region and beyond. PPPs can play a crucial role in the recovery and reconstruction process. I am happy to see that you have taken a very pro-active approach to this challenge. You have developed guidelines for policy makers on how **PPP projects can be accelerated in the reconstruction phase** in post-disaster and post-war contexts, with very practical policy recommendations. I am convinced that these guidelines will prove useful in the UNECE region and beyond. I also believe they will provide the right tools to streamline PPP and infrastructure projects, without compromising the broader goal of rebuilding economies and societies in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

These guidelines contain key policy recommendations for embedding **circular economy principles** and harnessing **digital transformation** in the built environments.



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These are cross-cutting themes that were prioritised by UNECE member States at the 69th and 70th Commission sessions. I believe they are crucial to successful and sustainable reconstruction programmes.

I am pleased to see that you have also identified the UNECE sustainability methodology PIERS as an instrument for aligning reconstruction projects with the SDGs. In a very short time, **the PIERS methodology** has become a useful tool for many countries: **More than 35 countries, both developed and developing, have used PIERS since 2021** to assess their projects against the SDGs. To date, over 200 projects have been evaluated ranging from **large-scale infrastructure** (bridges, tunnels, roads, metro rail, power generation worth billions of dollars) to **small-scale community projects** – car battery charging stations, rehabilitation of schools and medical facilities, and improved energy efficiency in public buildings. The secretariat has developed an online platform to make PIERS more user friendly - you will see a practical demonstration a bit later.

Nevertheless: We need to promote this tool more, both within and beyond our region. I want to see the **PIERS methodology becoming a flagship UN tool**, that is broadly known and used in Africa, Asia Latin America and elsewhere.

Partnering with other UN agencies and regional and international organisations is a way of promoting the PIERS methodology. UNECE has joined hands with the **Economic Commission for Africa** and the **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean** to implement the PIERS methodology in other regions. Through this cooperation, 6 UN Member States will benefit from specialised training and the evaluation of 40 of their priority PPP projects.



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Further scaling up is needed, however, if we are to have the desired impact. I call on donors and development partners to provide us with funding. Only then can we meet the ever-growing demand from member States to implement the PIERS methodology. I will certainly do my part by promoting it and fundraising for its implementation and use in countries.

Distinguished delegates,

We come together this week against the backdrop of the **triple planetary crisis** – climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Today also marks the first day of **COP28**, where the international community will take stock of and agree on how to address climate challenges. There is a dire need to integrate climate resilience and adaptation into infrastructure projects. This Working Party is **the only intergovernmental body in the UN system** dedicated to sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance in support of the SDGs. It therefore gives me great pleasure that you will develop practical guidelines on how to progressively **integrate climate resilience in projects**. I am also glad that this workstream is being coordinated with colleagues from the **UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**.

Let me conclude by thanking the **Government of Türkiye** for offering to host the 8th UNECE International PPP Forum in Istanbul in May 2024. I am also grateful to **Greece** and to the Chair of the Working Party, Mr. George Katapodis, for the support in hosting this year's Forum in Athens. The UNECE International PPP Forum has become an annual flagship event for the PPP community to exchange ideas and address some of the current and emerging challenges in sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance to



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accelerate SDG implementation. Having reliable partners to co-organise the Forum is crucial to ensure the event is useful to our member States.

I very much look forward to hearing the results of your deliberations, and I wish all of you a very productive two days.

Thank you.