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**Statement**

**by**

**Ms. Tatiana Molcean**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
Executive Secretary  
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at**

**Ministerial Meeting on SPECA Multi-Partner Trust Fund and SPECA Climate and  
Innovation Dialogue**

**14 November 2024**

**17:30 – 18:30**

**Room Special Event 3 (Mugham)  
Presidency Area**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to join you here today for the launch of the SPECA Climate and Innovation Dialogue and the introduction of the SPECA Multi-Partner Trust Fund, two important new SPECA initiatives.

SPECA is a unique format of interaction for the region, with a lot of potential for impactful regional cooperation on trade and transport, energy and environment, digitalization, and other key topics. The two new initiatives will further advance cooperation, partnerships, and collective solutions to shared challenges.

Allow me to provide some background on the journey to the establishment of the SPECA Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which was long in the making:

- We went through several rounds of negotiations among SPECA participating states in 2023, which resulted in the decision taken at the SPECA Summit in Baku in November 2023. At the Summit the decision was taken in principle, and we heard pledges by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
  - Then during the first half of 2024 we worked hard on finalizing the Fund's Terms of Reference by consensus of all SPECA participating states.
  - On 23 September 2024, UNECE and ESCAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the SPECA Multi-Partner Trust Fund in agreement with SPECA participating states.
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I would like to thank the SPECA participating States for their leadership and help, the ESCAP team for the great partnership on this initiative, and the team of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office for their support.

The establishment of the Trust Fund marks an important milestone for the evolution of SPECA. It will provide a mechanism to operationalize stronger cooperation and integration in the SPECA region through programmatic interventions and address the region's unique development needs.

I look forward to the next steps for the Fund: Receiving the announced pledges, convening the Steering Committee and establishing a small fund support team as soon as possible to kickstart the operation of the Fund. I hope we can review the progress and discuss the first concrete projects funded by the Trust Fund in 2025 and invite you all to join us in this important endeavor by supporting the Fund.

While we will hear more about the Trust Fund from my colleagues from UNECE and ESCAP shortly, I would like to also invite you to join the COP29 Presidency, the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, ESCAP and UNECE for a comprehensive briefing on the operationalization of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund on 20 November at 17:30 in Mugham room in the Presidency Area.

Lastly, UNECE welcomes the establishment of the SPECA Climate and Innovation Dialogue through the signature of the Baku Joint Ministerial Statement by SPECA participating States today. Linking innovation and climate action is necessary, as we grapple with many bottlenecks at industry and policy making level, both on adaption and mitigation. UNECE stands ready to support

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this initiative through the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development, and through our vibrant innovation team in Geneva.

Thank you.

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