



Statement by

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Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This concludes the statement on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Let me now, as the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, briefly elaborate on the OSCE-UNECE partnership, and why this partnership is so successful.

It is successful because it links issues of security, which is what the OSCE is about, to the economic, environmental and social factors which impact so directly on stability and security.

The UNECE is about those economic, environmental and social factors.

It is a technical and economic organization that, as part of the United Nations, offers a multilateral platform to

negotiate international legal instruments and standards on major pan-European transboundary issues such as transport, environment, trade and energy. Such normative work is supported by an expert secretariat, which is itself connected to a large network of governmental experts and decision-makers.

UNECE's products – norms, standards and international conventions – are technical. This may sound boring. But everyone stands to gain when countries adopt common legal instruments and standards. Consumers obtain guaranteed quality and safety. International trade and transport are facilitated. Shared assets which ignore borders, such as environment can be better protected. In short, the multiplication of technical instruments shared by the countries of the region, and even beyond, facilitates their economic relations, creates links, helps to overcome differences and contributes to the overall security and stability.

On its side, the OSCE provides a political platform and a network of field offices, and can give the political push to countries when needed. The UNECE values the political setting available at the OSCE and my presence here today

underlines the appreciation and significance of the UNECE-OSCE partnership.

The complementarity of the two organizations, which has existed for many years, led to cooperation between OSCE and the UNECE in the economic and environmental dimension, as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding that is carried out in the general framework of the 2003 OSCE Maastricht Strategy Document.

This is not a meaningless MOU but one that works. For example, in 2006, continuing a long tradition, the UNECE undertook the review of the implementation of OSCE's transport commitments. This is always a very substantial undertaking and I am heartened to say that the OSCE gave due recognition to this effort in 2006. This led to follow-up work that demonstrates that fruitful and mutually beneficial transport-related work can be undertaken jointly by the OSCE and the UNECE. The UNECE is pleased that its work can contribute to enhancing security in Europe.

This year, the OSCE Chair-in-Office has put the environment on the OSCE agenda. Both the OSCE and UN are trying to help to find more environmentally-friendly ways to produce, consume and discard.

The UNECE with its five environmental conventions and 12 related protocols as well as abundant expertise and experience in regional approaches is well-placed to assist the OSCE. Four of the five UNECE conventions focus on regional or transboundary co-operation. Not only do they provide frameworks to address cross-border environmental issues, but they are also practical instruments to prevent conflict.

Transboundary water co-operation in the rivers Chu and Talas, shared by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and Dniester, shared by Moldova and Ukraine have developed significantly due to continued joint UNECE - OSCE efforts and are prime examples of what can be achieved.

Other areas in which the UNECE is active – for example border crossing facilitation, energy efficiency and security can be added to the list of themes that underlie security and help to prevent conflict.

Here, the work done by UNECE in the area of the international transport of dangerous goods, including high consequence dangerous goods or efforts made within the UNECE framework to modernize border-crossing

procedures in order to facilitate trade and increase security should be noted.

All of this underlines the importance of a strong partnership between the OSCE and the UNECE – one that clearly gives credits to each other’s strengths and work and which is based on mutual respect.

In closing, I would like to thank Minister Moratinos and previous OSCE Chairs and also to stress that I look forward to continuing UNECE’s cooperation under the leadership of the Finnish Chairmanship.

We need to work together for the sake of the stability and well being of our region and I pledge that the UNECE will do its part.

Thank you.