

**70th Session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
"Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Development
in the UNECE Region"
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**Statement by Mr Samuel Žbogar, State Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Slovenia, I wish to express appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs for their dedicated work in these challenging times. I would also like to commend the Executive Secretary for her leadership of UNECE during the last six years.

Today, we are further away from fulfilling the 2030 Agenda than we were a year ago, including in the UNECE region. The pandemic, the growing inequalities, the climate and biodiversity crises, the unabated environmental degradation, as well as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine have been holding back the progress.

The latest IPCC report and the raising voices at the recent UN Water Conference are a strong reminder that the world remains far off track in preventing ecosystem degradation and its profound impact on international stability and security.

Climate and water are among Slovenia's top foreign policy priorities. There is a strong commitment to environmental transboundary cooperation and its positive effects on peace and stability. Slovenia is pleased to be taking over the presidency of the UNECE Water Convention 2024–2027 in December.

Science and technology are our powerful ally. Above all, they help us make quicker and better informed choices. For instance, the Slovenia-based International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence, under the auspices of UNESCO, is establishing the Water Observatory, a project aimed at helping governments collect and analyse data to automate reporting in accordance with key UN frameworks.

In the same vein, the Slovenian Centre for Space Sciences and Technologies has been developing cost-effective technologies for acquisition of high-resolution satellite data to support developing countries in transboundary management of river basins.

Green digital solutions and sustainable digitalization can deliver enormous environmental and climate benefits, and transform the UNECE region into an innovative, sustainable and resilient society and economy.

The synergy between the green transition and digital transformation will bring environmental, societal and economic benefits for all.

Slovenia advocates a human-centric vision of digital transformation, based on open and democratic societies, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ours is a vision of technology that empowers citizens and businesses to build more prosperous and inclusive societies and enable sustainable connectivity through robust standards and norms.

Madam Chair, Executive Secretary, Colleagues,

Let me conclude by wishing continued success to the Economic Commission for Europe and reiterate Slovenia's firm support to its important work. We look forward to working closely with other member states and learning from their experiences.

Thank you.