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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO 17TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Athens, 1 December 2009**

*Delivered by Mr. Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe*

It is a pleasure to send greetings to this meeting of the OSCE ministerial council. The past year proved once again that the OSCE is an invaluable partner of the United Nations. Together, we made progress in conflict prevention and conflict settlement, peacemaking and peace-building, democratization and human rights, counter-terrorism and the environmental aspects of security.

In Kosovo, the OSCE Mission, within the framework of Security Council resolution 1244, has continued to complement UN efforts to maintain peace and stability by working with all communities and facilitating the protection of their rights.

In Afghanistan, the deployment of the OSCE's Election Support was a welcome contribution to international efforts to build Afghan electoral capacity. As we look to further elections in 2010, we must address the shortcomings encountered this year.

I commend the Greek Chairmanship for its efforts to ensure the continuation of OSCE activities in Georgia, where the OSCE had an important role to play in the South Ossetian area of responsibility. While the UN and OSCE Missions were not renewed, we will continue our cooperation in the context of the Geneva international discussions, co-led by the EU, OSCE and UN.

In Central Asia, the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy works with the OSCE to tackle climate change and manage shared resources such as water. In this respect, the relationship between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has continued to be exemplary. By joining forces to promote cross-border economic and environmental cooperation, the two are addressing a variety of socio-economic drivers of potential conflict.

The partnership between the OSCE, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is also solid, and covers such key issues as displacement, statelessness in South-Eastern Europe, border management in Central Asia and protection monitoring in the South Caucasus. I also welcome the OSCE's close involvement in efforts to develop an Alliance of Civilizations Regional Strategy for South East Europe. I appreciate as well OSCE's useful work on promoting the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Finally, with the UN Climate Change Summit just days away, let me urge you to do your part to make Copenhagen a success. I look forward to new initiatives emanating from the long-standing cooperation among the OSCE, the UN Environmental Programme, the UN Development Programme and UNECE, under the umbrella of the Environment and Security Initiative.

I attach great importance to our partnership and our shared work for peace and security. I thank the Greek Chairmanship for its leadership, look forward to the incoming Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, and offer all of you my best wishes for a successful conference.