

Abstract of Presentation to Second Committee on “Integrating the Economic, Social and Environmental Pillars of Sustainable Development: Perspectives from the Regions” by Mr. Ján Kubiš, UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe

Over the last two decades the ECE region experienced uneven development in its main subregions. Economic growth in the high-income countries increased the already high living standards but continued to be environmentally unsustainable while becoming less equitable. For these countries, the challenge of the green economy and sustainable development will be to maintain their high level of human development with much smaller ecological footprints. For the upper middle-income transition economies the challenge will be to reduce the use of fossil energy while consolidating human development. For the low and lower middle-income transition economies the challenge will be to maintain their relatively small ecological footprints while accelerating sustainable growth and human development. The magnitude of these challenges is enormous and implies the need for a paradigm shift towards a growth model that must be both inclusive and green. This paradigm shift must be underpinned by a collective drive to build responsible global, regional and national governance.