



DECISIONS
OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SPECA GOVERNING COUNCIL

(Berlin, Germany, 14 November 2007)

Decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/1)

The Governing Council takes note of the progress reports presented by the Project Working Groups. It notes the growing number of activities implemented in the SPECA framework and the increased extra-budgetary funding over the past years. The Governing Council invites the Co-chairs of the Project Working Groups to prepare proposals on possible ways of raising effectiveness in the work of the Groups, as well as on more effective arrangements for their future reporting to the Governing Council.

Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/2)

1. The Governing Council expresses its general support to proposals for the 2008-2009 SPECA Work Plan as presented by the Co-Chairs of PWG on Trade and PWG on Gender and Economy as well as by representatives of UNECE and UNESCAP. At the same time the Council invites the Co-Chairs of Project Working Groups in consultation with relevant national experts of SPECA member countries, to undertake a final review of these proposals, identify priorities, and submit their comments and proposals to UNECE and UNESCAP by 20 December 2007. The Council invites the UNECE and UNESCAP to finalise the 2008-2009 SPECA Work Plan in light of these comments and proposals.

2. The Governing Council welcomes the increased level of funding for projects proposed for the 2008-2009 Work Plan in comparison with the previous Work Plan. At the same time the Governing Council stresses the need for continued efforts on the part of UNECE, ESCAP and member countries to mobilise additional funding in support of SPECA activities. The Council also stressed the need for giving greater focus within the Programme and for prioritization of activities.

Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/3)

The Governing Council endorses the recommendation of SPECA Coordinating Committee that Afghanistan becomes the Co-Chair of SPECA Project Working Group on Water and Energy Resources.

Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/4)

1. The Governing Council expressed its interest in the proposal to broaden the mandate of the Project Working Group on ICT for Development and to transform it into the Project Working Group on Knowledge Based Development (PWG-KBD).

2. The Governing Council agrees that the WG could become a useful forum for exchanges of experience and best practice, as well as capacity-building in such areas as competitiveness and innovative development, attracting financial resources in support of innovative sectors of the economy, commercialisation and protection of intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships, in addition to already ongoing work in the area of ICT for Development.
3. The Governing Council notes that proposed broadening of the thematic scope of the PWG does not imply that all of the additional thematic areas that could be dealt with by the PWG will be addressed at the same time in the immediate future. In particular, the Governing Council stresses that activities that could be carried out in 2008-2009 in addition to those related to ICT for Development, should be focused on a limited number of demand driven priority topics, and matched with available resources.
4. The Governing Council in principle agreed with the draft Terms of Reference as contained in Annex to this Decision, subject to possible suggestions on this matter to be submitted by SPECA member countries to the UNECE and ESCAP by 10 December 2007.
5. The Governing Council welcomes the interest of Azerbaijan to continue Co-Chairmanship of the PWG with a broadened mandate and invites other SPECA member countries to consider becoming the second Co-Chair of the Group
6. The Governing Council invites UNECE and ESCAP, subject to views received from SPECA member countries, to organise the first meeting of the PWG on KBD in 2008, so that the Group can approve its broadened Terms of Reference and agree on priority activities to be included in its programme of work in areas other than ICT for Development. The Governing Council invites UNECE and UNESCAP to prepare detailed proposals on such activities for consideration by the PWG at its first session. The Governing Council agreed that it would be useful to ensure that the first meeting of the Group would also serve capacity-building purposes.

Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/5)

The Governing Council expresses its appreciation to the Regional team of researchers for preparing a study “Improving the business and investment environment through technical assistance for regional economic cooperation”. The Governing Council invites UNECE and UNESCAP to examine the recommendations contained in the study and present their proposals on possible course of action for consideration by relevant SPECA Project Working Groups or by the Governing Council, as may be required.

Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/6)

1. The Governing Council took note with appreciation of the report on on-going efforts to strengthen SPECA and proposals contained therein. It encourages the Governments of member countries to take full advantage of SPECA within its programmatic scope, as a mechanism for capacity building activities for the benefit of interested member countries and as a neutral UN framework for the discussion of complex issues of regional cooperation, with the support of in-house expertise of the two UN Regional Commissions and in cooperation with other partner organisations.

2. The Governing Council notes with interest that UNECE and ESCAP are considering establishing regional presence in SPECA region with a view to strengthening programme implementation, working more closely with partner organisations already present in the region and raising the effectiveness of fund-raising.

Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/7)

The Governing Council welcomes the significant progress achieved in establishing regular and substantial coordination and cooperation between SPECA and other programmes and organizations supporting regional economic cooperation in Central Asia, in particular with UNDP, the CAREC Group, EurAsEC and SCO. The Governing Council urges the UNECE and UNESCAP and other organizations and programmes to work closely together and coordinate their programmes of work, including the elaboration and implementation of joint projects in support of regional cooperation, whenever feasible.

Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/8)

1. The Governing Council expresses its appreciation of the report by the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNESCAP on the First (2007) Meeting of the SPECA Economic Forum “Focus on Asia”, held on 18 and 19 May 2007 in Almaty.

2. The Governing Council notes with satisfaction of the outcomes of the Second (2007) Meeting of the SPECA Economic Forum in the form of the Conference “Central Asia and Europe: a New Economic Partnership for the 21st Century”, held on 13 November 2007 in Berlin.

3. The Governing Council invites UNECE and UNESCAP to take fully into account the results of these two meetings of the SPECA Economic Forum when elaborating proposals for the future strategic direction of the Programme. The Governing Council agrees that SPECA should increasingly focus on those areas of regional economic cooperation, which will allow its member countries to take better advantage of the special geographical position of their region in the centre of the Eurasian continent as well as of support in related capacity-building offered, within their areas of expertise, by UNECE and UNESCAP, working in cooperation with partner organizations

Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/9)

The Governing Council welcomes the inclusion of the UN and in particular the UNECE as an implementing partner in the Central Asia Strategy of the European Union. It invites the UNECE – working closely with UNESCAP in the framework of SPECA – to support the implementation of the Strategy in areas covered by its mandate and where it enjoys clear comparative advantages as the Secretariat of the relevant international legal instruments, and custodian of internationally agreed norms, standards and recommendations, and where it can offer high-quality in-house expertise.

Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/10)

1. The Governing Council notes that 2008 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Tashkent Declaration, which established the Programme. The Governing Council notes that UNECE and UNESCAP, in this context, have invited the Government of Uzbekistan to consider taking the Chairmanship of the Programme in 2008 and invited the Government of Uzbekistan to give positive consideration to this proposal. The Governing Council also noted with appreciation that UNECE and

UNESCAP have also suggested to the Government of Turkmenistan to consider taking the chairmanship of SPECA in the future.

2. The Governing Council invites UNECE and UNESCAP to consult with the SPECA member countries on possible arrangements for appropriate commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Tashkent Declaration and on the time and venue of the next meeting of the Governing Council and the Economic Forum.

3. The Governing Council welcomes the initiative of the Russian Federation to organize jointly with UNECE and UNESCAP a forum in 2008 with participation of business from the SPECA member countries, Russian Federation and other interested countries.

4. The Governing Council expresses its appreciation to the Government of Germany for its hospitality and for the arrangements made for the meetings of the Governing Council and the Economic Forum.