



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)

Sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council

(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 11 November 2011)

REPORT

I. Introduction

The sixth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was held in Ashgabat on 11 November 2011.

II. Participants

Representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan as well as the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia participated in the session. Representatives of other United Nations member States, the European Union, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations also participated as observers. The List of participants of the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council and the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum is attached (Annex I).

III. Opening of the session

The session was chaired by H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

The Governing Council honoured with a minute of silence the memory of the late First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Asadullo Gulomovich Gulomov, former Chairperson of the SPECA Governing Council and SPECA National Coordinator in Tajikistan.

In his opening address, the Chairperson emphasized that SPECA needs new approaches, new perspectives if it is to remain relevant and effective in supporting regional cooperation in Central Asia. The Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum “Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia” held in Ashgabat on 7 and 8 June 2011 was a good example of adding new directions and new forms of work to the Programme. Basing its work on the outcomes of the Istanbul Summit that launched the Istanbul Process on 2 November 2011 and the upcoming Bonn Conference on Afghanistan, SPECA could become a key framework for supporting the socio-economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan through strengthened regional cooperation.

The Government of Turkmenistan – in accordance with relevant initiatives put forward by the President of Turkmenistan at the United Nations General Assembly – supports the central role of the United Nations in promoting sustainable development, security and stability. SPECA should

continue its work in these areas in 2012 in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA).

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary and SPECA Coordinator in UNECE, characterized the last 6 years of the SPECA activities as a period of strengthening and broadening of the Programme, with better financing of projects and greater scope of activities. SPECA is increasingly regarded as a desirable partner by other international and regional organizations, be it the implementation of the Central Asia Strategy of the European Union, joint activities with EurAsEC on the basis of a MoU or recognition of its activities in support of Afghanistan by the G8. The Governments of member countries have traditionally played an active role in the governance of the Programme and in shaping its project portfolio. The 2005 Astana Conference, initiated and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, where the comprehensive reform of the Programme was launched is a good example of active involvement by a member country.

Mr. Shun-ichi Murata, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP, informed about some of the activities implemented by ESCAP with the participation of and for the benefit of SPECA member countries. Improvements in decision-making on pricing and energy economics could provide more incentives for private companies and investors to promote more efficient use of energy resources. He mentioned the Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency as a good example of long-term involvement of SPECA in energy efficiency and sustainable use of energy resources. Mr. Shun-ichi Murata noted intergovernmental transport agreements developed by ESCAP as solid basis for promoting economic development SPECA member countries. He pointed to the need to improve coordination with partners within the United Nations system.

The Chairperson – quoting the initiative by the President of Turkmenistan at the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly – proposed to examine if SPECA could add energy security to the portfolio of areas it is covering. Strengthening SPECA work in support of the development of Eurasian transport corridors is another important priority.

The representative of Afghanistan reminded the Governing Council of his initiative presented at the Economic Forum to review progress achieved in supporting economic cooperation between his country and the Central Asian countries at a side event of the SPECA Economic Forum and the next session of the SPECA Governing Council to take place at the end of 2012. He pointed out that SPECA member countries are facing the same challenges and problems when it comes to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He also suggested that the two Regional Commissions give consideration to presenting at the next session of the SPECA Governing Council background information on the possibilities of integrating an exchange of experiences on MDG implementation within the SPECA framework. He also noted that Afghanistan, like several other SPECA member countries, is unlikely to fully achieve several key MDGs by 2015. A more regular exchange of experiences and best practices would accelerate progress towards achievement of MDGs by all SPECA member countries.

The representative of Azerbaijan agreed with the assessment of previous speakers that SPECA is in a period of expanding activities and should continue along this road.

The representative of Kazakhstan also agreed that SPECA is in a period of growth, implementing many regional initiatives and projects. He praised the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan for having given a strong impulse to the Programme.

The representative of Kyrgyzstan expressed strong endorsement of the SPECA activities in support of regional cooperation in the trade and economic fields. He noted that resources should be directed

to areas where the political will of member countries to cooperate exists. Stronger regional cooperation is extremely important for landlocked SPECA member countries and therefore the Programme should act as a catalyst by taking forward existing and future initiatives.

The representative of Tajikistan listed several areas, including water, energy and trade, in particular promotion of the Single Window, where his country wanted to see more active SPECA involvement adding that cooperation and coordination with partner organizations should be further strengthened.

IV. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council was adopted by the delegations of the SPECA member countries.

V. Outcomes of the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum and the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum

The Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE presented a report on the outcomes of the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum “Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen the Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia” and the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum “20 Years of Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Central Asia: Successes, Challenges and Prospects”. The Chairperson of the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum presented the Conclusions at the closing session of the Economic Forum which are contained in the Report on the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum.

During the ensuing discussion the representative of Kazakhstan proposed to explore possibilities for the involvement of SPECA in promoting regional cooperation on migration issues, especially labour migration, and encouraged continued active efforts to assist in the modernization of legal frameworks for regional water resources management. He added that SPECA should consider providing input into this process, if necessary, at the highest political level.

The representative of Tajikistan proposed that SPECA in addition to dealing with the transport of dangerous goods could also cover the transport of heavy and over-sized goods.

The Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE thanked delegates for their valuable proposals while recalling participants that some of the issues mentioned are partially outside of the SPECA mandate. UNECE and ESCAP could explore possibilities for cooperation with partner organizations, e.g. in the case of labour migration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), while projects could be jointly implemented within the SPECA framework.

The Chairperson noted that SPECA is the right framework for raising issues of regional cooperation: if necessary, other United Nations agencies and international partners should be invited to implement projects jointly within the SPECA framework.

VI. SPECA activities since the last session of the Governing Council (Geneva, 19 October 2010)

Mr. Rumen Dobrinsky, Director of the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Division, presented the Progress Reports on the activities carried out by the SPECA Project Working Groups since the last session of the SPECA Governing Council (Annex II).

The representative of Azerbaijan proposed modifying a reference to the Single Window project in his country.

Several delegates emphasized the high quality of documents prepared by the secretariat and thanked the specialists for the preparation of the Progress Reports of the SPECA Project Working Groups and the draft SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013.

VII. Adoption of the SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013, including the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia

The Director of the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Division presented the draft SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013, Part I “Ongoing, planned and possible UNECE and ESCAP activities in support of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)” and Part II “Planned and possible UNECE and ESCAP activities in support of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)”. The SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013 is attached (Annex III and Annex IV).

Several delegates proposed technical corrections in the draft Work Plan, as there were two projects included that ended in 2011. These projects should either be removed or a footnote should be attached explaining why they are included in the Work Plan.

The representative of Tajikistan reiterated his proposal to elaborate and include in the Work Plan projects on the transport of dangerous, heavy and over-sized goods. It was agreed that the Work Plan is an open document and such projects could be included in the future if the relevant Project Working Group approves a project proposal.

The representative of Afghanistan proposed to include in Part II of the Work Plan (Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia) only projects that are clearly and explicitly focusing on strengthening economic cooperation between his country and its Central Asian neighbours. It was agreed that all projects that do not meet this criteria would be moved from Part II to Part I of the Work Plan and efforts would be made to develop and include new, more focused projects.

The Chairperson supported the proposal by the representative of Afghanistan and emphasized the importance of including new, well-focused projects in Part II of the SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013.

VIII. Cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions

Mr. Marton Krasznai, UNECE Regional Advisor and SPECA focal point at UNECE, presented a report on cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions.

The Chairperson encouraged the Regional Commissions to provide more detailed information on cooperation with other United Nations agencies, partner organizations and donors as this is an important contribution to the effectiveness of SPECA.

IX. Other business, including information on the establishment of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia in Almaty

Opening of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia

Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, provided detailed information on the establishment of the Office and its capacity to support programme implementation within the SPECA framework.

Nomination of contact points in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the SPECA member countries

The SPECA focal point at UNECE introduced a proposal to appoint contact persons in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the SPECA member countries to improve information flows on the SPECA activities.

The Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE highlighted that nominated contact points in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the SPECA member countries would assist SPECA National Coordinators by facilitating liaison and communication with relevant national ministries and partners.

The Chairperson proposed sending a Note Verbal by UNECE to the Permanent Missions of the SPECA member countries to the United Nations Office at Geneva requesting the nomination of a SPECA contact point in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Assistance to the preparation of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan

The SPECA focal point at UNECE informed the Governing Council on a request by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to the UNECE for assistance in the preparation and conduct of the 5th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA).

The Chairperson reminded of the importance of strengthening support within the SPECA framework to regional cooperation between Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries as a new direction of the SPECA activities. The representative of Afghanistan thanked the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan for supporting efforts to strengthen the stability and sustainable development of his country.

Date and venue of the next session of the SPECA Governing Council and 2012 SPECA Economic Forum

The Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP invited the SPECA member countries to hold the next session of the Governing Council and the 2012 SPECA Economic Forum in Bangkok in the last quarter of 2012.

Election of the next Chair (country) of SPECA

The representative of Kazakhstan proposed to the Governing Council to express its gratitude to Turkmenistan in the form of a decision for the active work as the Chair of SPECA in 2011 and proposed to elect Turkmenistan as the Chair of the Programme for 2012.

X. Adoption of Decisions

The Chairperson presented the Decisions of the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council.

The representative of Kazakhstan proposed to the Governing Council to express its sincere gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan in the form of a decision for the excellent organization and generous hospitality offered to the participants of the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum, the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum and the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council.

He also proposed that the Governing Council expresses its deep appreciation to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats and their Executive Secretaries for their efforts to organize these important annual events and for the active work aimed at strengthening aimed at strengthening SPECA and continued strong support to Programme implementation.

The Governing Council adopted 12 Decisions. The Decisions of the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council are attached to this report (Annex V).

In accordance with the established practice, the Decisions will be circulated among delegations of the SPECA member countries of the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council and will enter into force, if no objection is received, within 30 days.

XI. Closing of the session

The sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council was closed by the Chairperson following a closing statement by the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE on behalf of the two United Nations Regional Commissions.

SIXTH SESSION OF THE SPECA GOVERNING COUNCIL

and

2011 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM

(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 10-11 November 2011)

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PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECA PROJECT WORKING GROUPS

Implementation of the SPECA Work Plan for 2010-2011, adopted by the Governing Council at its fourth session on 13 November 2009, has proceeded according to schedule. Activities carried out by the six SPECA Project Working Groups since the last session of the Governing Council are summarized below.

I. PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON WATER AND ENERGY RESOURCES

Dam safety

The project to improve safety of dam operations in Central Asia started in 2006. There are two main results from the first phase of the project: (i) a model national law on safety of large hydraulic facilities, including dams, intended to be a base of national harmonized legal frameworks for dam safety; and (ii) a draft of the regional agreement on cooperation on dam safety, which stipulates, *inter alia*, exchange of information and notification of other countries in case of accidents with dams.

The second phase of the project was implemented during the period 2008-2011 with funding from Finland and the Russian Federation. The main results of the second phase include further negotiations and development of the draft regional agreement, input to the development of dam safety legislation in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as joint training for experts in the region. A Technical Regulation for all five countries has been approved, and a safety review of the Kirov dam on the Talas river has been performed. Information about the project can be found on: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.htm>.

Water, Environmental and Energy Information

The “Central Asian Regional Water Information Base” (CAREWIB) Project, funded by Switzerland, was launched in 2004. It is implemented by the Scientific Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC-ICWC) in Tashkent in cooperation with UNECE and UNEP/Grid-Arendal. The project includes a Water Portal (www.cawater-info.net) that provides access to Central Asian water information, a bibliographic database of Land and Water Resources Use in the Aral Sea basin, lists of and links to donors active in the Aral Sea basin, databases for the Aral Sea basin, the Amudarya and the Syrdarya river basins, etc. The portal also hosts the websites of various projects. The project further includes the development of an Information System on Water and Land Resources in the region for experts and decision makers in the five Central Asian States. Phase 2 of the project started in the end of 2007.

In the second phase of the CAREWIB project, the focus has been on developing national water information systems. An evaluation of the project made by the Swiss donors is presently being discussed by the involved partners. The result of this discussion will be decisive on whether the project will be continued.

Development of Cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers

On 26 July 2006, water relations in Central Asia took a significant step forward when the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Chu and Talas Rivers Commission was inaugurated with the support of UNECE. The

establishment of the Commission created a mutually beneficial way for Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to share responsibility for water infrastructure used by both countries. A new project in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) - started in 2008 and funded by Finland - supports the further broadening of cooperation to improve the joint management of the Chu and Talas rivers, to include, among others, protection of ecosystems and stakeholder participation in the river management.

Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia

The Programme “Trans-boundary Water Management in Central Asia” was launched in 2008 by the Government of Germany. A Programme component “Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management” is implemented in 2009-2011 by the UNECE. It includes work on regional institutions, international water legislation and regional Guidelines/Principles for water management, as well as development of monitoring and information exchange.

Water quality in Central Asia

The United Nations Development Account has made funding available to UNECE for a project to improve cooperation and policy related to water quality in Central Asia. The project started in the beginning of 2009 and is being undertaken in collaboration with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). The project is aiming to establish common principles for measurement, exchange of information and joint assessment. The development of more efficient national policies, including the standards and principles applied in the regulation of environmentally harmful activities, is another key aspect. As the water quality monitoring has seriously deteriorated since the early 1990s, it is a challenge to establish a basic monitoring network. The project has contributed to a more active discussion of water quality issues in the region and a regional plan for further development of cooperation in this area was presented during the Astana Ministerial Conference in September 2011.

Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency and Conservation

In 2006, the SPECA Coordinating Committee endorsed the Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency and Conservation which had been previously reviewed by the Project Working Group on Water and Energy Resources. As a follow-up, meetings in 2008 and 2009 focused on identifying priority activities under the Baku Initiative. Recommendations included (a) the development of a network of energy efficiency institutions among SPECA member countries; (b) the development of a regional project on energy efficiency in buildings; and (c) the development of a regional concept on energy efficiency.

A number of projects have been initiated in 2009 and 2010 to support these recommendations. The project “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Support Energy Efficiency in Selected Asian Countries”, funded by the Korean Energy Management Corporation (KEMCO), includes the SPECA subregion in its analysis. The results of the preliminary study are available, and guidelines for institutions are currently being developed. An Asia-Pacific regional meeting was held in April 2010 which included Central Asian countries.

With regards to the concept on energy efficiency in the SPECA region, a project “Supporting the implementation of the Baku initiative on energy efficiency and conservation for sustainable and inclusive development” was initiated in 2010 to work with countries to develop an energy efficiency concept that will allow cooperation in implementing energy efficiency policies at the subregional level. Though initially only four of the SPECA member countries are included under

the concept, it is hoped that further SPECA member countries will join this initiative, subject to available funding.

In addition to this, the “Eco-efficiency and Sustainable Urban Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific” project incorporates a study on eco-efficient public buildings in Tajikistan along with a number of eco-efficiency activities in other Asian cities.

Within the framework of “Financing Energy Efficiency for Climate Change Mitigation” Project, UNECE has been working on enhancing the capacity of its Member States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to attract private sector financing.

Following this successful Initiative of the UNECE, the Project “Global Energy Efficiency 21” was launched in 2009 by all Regional Commissions, including ESCAP, to replicate this initiative in other regions. The Project was funded by the Russian Federation. The GEE21 workshops were held under the First and Second Energy Efficiency Forums (in Astana in October 2010 and in Dushanbe in September 2011). Through the GEE21, it is expected that more countries from Central Asia will participate in strengthening the capacity of each country to foster energy efficiency market formation, public-private partnerships and to attract more private sector investment.

The Project “Development of the Renewable Energy Sector in the Russian Federation and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries”: Prospects for Interregional Cooperation” was funded by the Russian Federation and launched by UNECE in 2008. The project significantly contributed to regional cooperation. Five SPECA member countries – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – were actively involved in the project activities and the regional networks. National Reports from participating countries have been elaborated and commissioned by UNECE. A strategy to promote an enhanced investment climate for renewable energy technologies has been prepared. The final publication will be issued by the end of 2011 and disseminated among all SPECA member countries.

The United Nations Development Account has made funding available for a Project “Mitigating climate change through attracting foreign direct investment in advanced fossil fuel technologies”. The Project was launched in 2010 and will be executed by the UNECE in cooperation with UN DESA, ESCAP and UNCTAD (from 2011). Five SPECA member countries – Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – are involved in the project activities.

The objective is to enhance governments’ abilities to attract foreign direct investment into advanced fossil fuels technologies to support energy security, energy efficiency and low-carbon sustainable development.

The Cooperative Project “Methane Capture and Use: Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines” was launched in 2008 by UNECE, Methane to Market Partnership (M2M Partnership) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). The Best Practice Guidance publication is intended for managers, mine operators, regulators, and government officials. The publication has been launched in March 2010. The workshops and seminars to disseminate the findings to mining professionals were held in China (2010), Kazakhstan and Ukraine (2011). It is expected that more countries from Central Asia will be interested in the Guidance.

With the support from the Russian Federation, in 2011 ESCAP has initiated the project on development the online database of policy and legal frameworks for energy efficiency and clean energy technologies. The online database will include policy and legal documents, standards and

regulations related to the development of energy sector, energy efficiency and clean energy technologies for the countries of Central Asia and neighbouring countries. National experts from each participating country are currently involved in data selection and uploading relevant information to the database. The working prototype of the Database has been already demonstrated at the Second International Energy Efficiency Forum in Dushanbe (12-14 September 2011). Further studies with a view to identify market opportunities for energy efficiency in Central Asia are planned for 2011 and 2012.

The outcome of the studies is planned to be discussed at an interregional workshop (between the countries of North and Central Asia and North-East Asia) on energy efficiency in Urumqi, China in 2012.

II. PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND BORDER CROSSING

The annual sessions of the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC) serve as an effective cooperation mechanism to address the specific problems of transit transport from, in and through SPECA member countries. Improvement of international transit transport infrastructure and services, as recognized in the Almaty Programme of Action, facilitates further integration of SPECA member countries into international trade and the global economy.

The ESCAP resolution 63/9 on Implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme, phase 1 (2007-2011) reiterated its support for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action for the benefit of landlocked and transit developing countries.

The 16th session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 20-21 April 2011, discussed specific issues relating to transport policy, infrastructure and facilitation. Main conclusions and recommendations include:

1. The PWG reaffirmed the importance of the international legal instruments and invited SPECA member countries to intensify their efforts to accede to and effectively implement the conventions. In this respect, the PWG encourages SPECA member countries which are not yet parties to the Agreement concerning the transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR) and the Agreement concerning the transport of perishable foodstuffs (ATP) to accede to them as soon as possible.
2. The PWG highlighted the need to identify any outstanding issues related to the accession to and implementation of the conventions, and requested the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats to provide assistance in assessing the implications of acceding to and implementing the transport-related international legal instruments, when possible.
3. The PWG invited those SPECA member countries that have not yet done so to take measures towards acceptance, approval or ratification of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network. The PWG also encouraged SPECA member countries to actively participate in ESCAP activities related to the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.
4. The PWG welcomed the initiative of NIITK on the preparation of the overview of the transport sector in the SPECA member countries and requested them to provide their comments/ suggestions on the draft overview before the document is published on the SPECA Transport website. In this respect, the PWG noted the role of NIITK as an institute of technical support through the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of

Kazakhstan in the implementation of the PWG-TBC projects and activities, and highlighted the need for financial and other assistance to NIITK along with continuing advisory assistance by ESCAP and UNECE.

5. Welcoming the progress made in the implementation of the project on the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages, the PWG took note of the expert group meetings organized within the framework of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project in the second half of 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey, and Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan, and encouraged SPECA member countries to actively participate in the project.
6. Highlighting the importance of the effective cooperation and coordination among all relevant stakeholders in the public and private sectors for the formulation and implementation of international transport facilitation measures, the PWG noted the current status/progress of SPECA member countries in establishing/strengthening national coordination mechanisms for trade and transport facilitation, and noted the availability of the UNECE and ESCAP funds for workshops and advisory services at the request of member countries.
7. The PWG was informed on the Development Account Project in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The PWG took note that the project may be expanded to other SPECA member countries in future.
8. The PWG noted with satisfaction the tangible results achieved by the UN Development Account project on Improving Global Road Safety: setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets, jointly undertaken by five UN Regional Commissions, and invited SPECA member countries to take actions to respond to the decade of action for road safety and to embrace the UN work undertaken at global and regional levels.
9. The PWG noted the progress achieved in the development of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note, and encouraged SPECA member countries to consider actively participating in the project to contribute to the creation of the unified rail transport law and promoting facilitation of railway transportation, in particular through an effective participation in the Group of Experts which met for the first time on 6 May 2011 in Geneva.
10. The PWG noted the potential benefits of Public-Private Partnership modalities and encouraged SPECA member countries to take advantage of the training materials prepared by UNECE and ESCAP.
11. The PWG adopted its Programme of Work for the biennium 2012-2013.

III. PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON TRADE

Since the last session of the SPECA Governing Council, the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade (PWG on Trade) has continued the implementation of its Work Programme. As indicated in the strategic planning documents of the PWG, the main focus remained on trade facilitation – a key area for overcoming obstacles and achieving trade integration and development in the Central Asian region. Building synergies with various regional partners, such as EurAsEC, the Commission of the Customs Union of EurAsEC, CAREC, the Islamic Development Bank and other agencies, received much attention. Another key area, activities in which expanded significantly in the last year, was the SPECA Initiative on Aid-for-Trade. The SPECA Aid-for-Trade Roadmap Initiative and the accompanying network of donors, international organizations and recipients were developed further. A pivotal event was the organization, back-to-back with the

fifth session of the PWG on Trade, of the first SPECA Aid-for-Trade Ministerial Conference in December 2010. In more detail, the following activities were carried out:

- UNECE, ESCAP and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in close collaboration with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP, ITFC, ITC, UNIDO, and other organizations, organized on 1-2 December 2010 in Baku, Azerbaijan, a Ministerial Conference on Aid-for-Trade. This event was part of the SPECA Aid-for-Trade Roadmap Initiative, which UNECE organized in collaboration with the governments of the region and other international institutions. The objective was to involve the SPECA member countries even more in the WTO Aid-for-Trade programme as beneficiaries. The UNDP Regional Office for Europe and CIS in Bratislava prepared and presented at the Ministerial Conference national and regional need assessments. ITC and UNIDO organized capacity-building seminars parallel to the AfT Ministerial Conference.
- All SPECA member countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) were represented: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan on the level of ministers, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on the level of deputy ministers. Several donors participated, notably, Finland, which is the main supporter of the UNDP Aid-for-Trade project for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
- The Ministerial Declaration reiterated the will of the SPECA member countries to participate in the Aid-for-Trade programme, and set up a Council on its implementation and monitoring.
- The fifth session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade took place on 2 December 2010, after the Ministerial meeting decided that the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade should actively provide institutional support and “national ownership” of the initiative.
- The follow-up mechanism to the Baku Ministerial Conference included weekly teleconferences of the main participating agencies, which discussed the various technical cooperation projects identified in the AfT initiative. A matrix of national projects was developed and presented to various WTO Aid-for-Trade meetings.
- The trade facilitation work, which UNECE and other implementation agencies had implemented for years, made significant progress in 2010-2011. A major event was the support that the Kazakhstan Single Window project received from its Government, but also the increasing involvement of the Commission of the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan, which also adopted the Single Window as a priority, and developed a Feasibility Study. UNECE and the Commission of the Customs Union co-organized a major conference on the Single Window on 7-8 April 2011 in Moscow, in which Kazakhstan played an active role.
- The Inter-parliamentary Assembly of EurAsEC and UNECE continued their close cooperation on identifying the legal impediments to trade facilitation, the Single Window and data harmonization and e-commerce, with a view to harmonize the related legislation in the EurAsEC Member States in the area of trade procedures, e-commerce and information exchange. A joint publication was issued on the matter.
- The first phase of the Single Window project in Azerbaijan was finalized and the system is operational.

- UNECE and GIZ continued their support for the Single Window project in Kyrgyzstan.
- Experts from Central Asia participated in the Single Window and trade facilitation capacity-building events organized by UNECE and ESCAP in Bangkok and Seoul.

The UNECE is working also with the SPECA member countries on promoting inter-agency electronic data interchange. The UNECE proposals on harmonization and implementation of information standards and on inter-agency data exchange were submitted to and were discussed at the CIS Interstate Council meeting in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan (10-12 May 2011) as well as other meetings. SPECA member countries expressed their interest in further cooperation with UNECE on identified issues.

IV. PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON STATISTICS

The sixth meeting of the SPECA Project Working Group on Statistics (PWG) took place in Geneva on 16 June 2011. It was attended by representatives from the following SPECA member countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Representatives from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Stat), the European Commission (Eurostat), the World Bank (WB) and Statistics Norway also participated in the meeting. During the meeting, participants emphasized the importance of the SPECA PWG on Statistics in identifying and prioritizing needs for national and regional capacity-building programmes but also addressed some issues concerning the scarce financial and human resources allocated through the Programme to the implementation and follow-up of these projects.

The outcome of the discussions was that in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of capacity-building activities the PWG on Statistics could be a suitable platform for enhancing the coordination and monitoring of technical cooperation activities in the SPECA region. As such, the SPECA PWG on Statistics should operate as a partnership group for capacity-building and invite major multilateral and bilateral agencies/donors to participate.

In order to support the development of national statistical capacities in the SPECA region, UNECE, in cooperation with other national and international donors, organized in 2010 and 2011, 12 seminars and training workshops and 21 advisory missions on various statistical domains related to population censuses and migration statistics, economic development, monitoring the achievement of MDGs, gender and violence against women, sustainable development, statistical quality, statistical literacy, and communication with users.

Global Assessments of national statistical systems (GA) were conducted in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the objective to reviewing the compliance of national statistics with international standards and methodologies, including the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Long-term development plans to improve national statistics have been drafted by these countries based on recommendations formulated in the respective GA's reports. Global Assessments of SPECA national statistical systems will continue in Tajikistan in 2012 and a follow-up assessment in Kazakhstan in 2013.

V. PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

This progress report contains activities carried out/to be carried out by the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats within the framework of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD), or addressing topics within its thematic areas in 2011. These activities are in line with the Programme of Work for 2010-2011 of the PWG, which was adopted

at the second session in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 12 November 2009 and the revised Programme of Work for 2011, adopted at the third session in Astana, Kazakhstan on 30 September 2010.

The UNECE and ESCAP secretariats, within the framework of implementation of the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD, organized/will organize the following capacity-building events in 2011:

- UNECE Workshop on best practices in the sphere of Public-Private Partnerships (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 26 January 2011).
- UNECE High-level Policy Seminar on Developing Innovative Entrepreneurship (Haifa, Israel, 28 March - 2 April 2011).
- UNECE Capacity-building meeting on the UNECE Public-Private Partnerships Initiative (Geneva, Switzerland, 18-19 April 2011).
- UNECE Applied Policy Seminar "Policies for Innovation in the 21st Century: Broadening the Horizons of Collaboration and Risk Sharing" (Geneva, Switzerland, 12-13 May 2011).
- UNECE Training Workshop on Public-Private Partnerships within the fourth Annual CEE and SEE Summit (Prague, Czech Republic, 8 June 2011).
- UNECE International Conference "Raising Awareness of the Role of Intellectual Property Rights in Innovation and the Dangers and Economic Costs of Intellectual Property Rights Infringements - Good Practices and Policy Recommendations" (Geneva, Switzerland, 7-8 July 2011).
- UNECE International Conference "Promoting Eco-innovation: Policies and Opportunities" (Tel Aviv, Israel, 11 -13 July 2011).
- UNECE Subregional Conference on Commercialization and Evaluation of Intellectual Property and on Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 11-12 October 2011).
- UNECE International Conference on Knowledge-based Development and Innovative Entrepreneurship (Baku, Azerbaijan, 24 - 25 November 2011).
- Third meeting of the UNECE Expert Group on Public-Private Partnerships for CIS countries (Baku, Azerbaijan, 25 November 2011).
- UNECE Special Meeting on the Innovation Performance Review of Kazakhstan (Geneva, Switzerland, 30 November 2011).
- UNECE Special Meeting on the UNECE Public-Private Partnerships Initiative (Geneva, Switzerland, 1 December 2011).
- ESCAP/APCICT Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Subregional Training of Trainers Workshop on APCICT's "Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders" (Academy) Modules 9 (ICT and Disaster Risk Management) and Module 10 (ICT and Climate Change) (Issyk-kul Lake, Kyrgyzstan, 7-9 September 2011).

- ESCAP/APCICT Launch of the Tajik version of Academy Curriculum & National Workshop in Tajikistan on Academy Module 3 (e-Government Applications), Module 7 (ICT Project Management in Theory and Practice) and Module 8 (Options for Funding ICT for Development) (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 13-18 September 2011).
- ESCAP Regional workshop on cooperation and information sharing for flood risk reduction and extreme weather events in Central Asia (Baku, Azerbaijan, 23-25 November 2011).

Representatives of the SPECA member countries also participated/will participate in the following events:

- Regional Training of Trainers on Academy Modules 9 and 10 (Seongnam City, Republic of Korea, 22-26 February 2011)
- Second Regional Forum on ICT Capacity-Building (Incheon and Cheonan, Republic of Korea, 24-28 October 2011). The Forum will provide an opportunity to review the progress achieved by APCICT, deliberate upon the lessons learned, and accordingly formulate the roadmap for its future work so that APCICT can deliver more impactful services to ESCAP Member States. The Forum will also help facilitate multilateral cooperation, providing a suitable occasion for ICT and development stakeholders to share their experiences and best practices, assess current needs, and identify areas for mutual collaboration. The Regional Forum will be a large-scale event with over 100 participants from around 30 countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.
- ESCAP Expert Group Meeting on Regional Knowledge and Cooperation for Comprehensive Multi-Hazard Risk Management in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand, 27-29 June 2011).
- Second session of the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (Bangkok, Thailand, 29 June - 1 July 2011).
- Consultative Meeting on Regional Cooperative Mechanisms on Space Applications for an Effective Disaster Management and Sustainable Development (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 25-27 October 2011).
- Sixth session of the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (Geneva, Switzerland, 30 November – 2 December 2011).

VI. WORKING GROUP ON GENDER AND ECONOMY

The SPECA Working Group on Gender and Economy (WG) is committed to support its member countries in developing gender-sensitive policy responses to economic challenges. It aims to enhance women's economic opportunities and to promote gender equality in Central Asia, contributing to implementing the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Working Group on Gender and Economy met on 20 September 2011 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. In addition to reviewing activities over the period 2010-2011, the Group shared examples of gender-sensitive economic policies in Central Asia, identified priorities, discussed project proposals for new activities and agreed on a Work Plan for 2012-2013.

Capacity-building activities to support women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region

As in previous years, the Centre for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre in cooperation with the UNECE have continued to run biannual international training workshops on “Support systems for women in small business at national and local levels” (13-29 April 2010 and 7-24 March 2011) and on “Women entrepreneurs and information communication technologies” (2-19 August 2010). The next workshop on information and communication technologies will take place on 7-20 December 2011.

The capacity-building workshops, held in Russian, are targeted at women entrepreneurs from Central Asia. They provide support, guidance and managerial tools on the use of new technologies in the management of small businesses. They further address government institutions in charge of small and medium-sized enterprise development at national and local levels, women’s business associations and other civil society organizations to build their capacity to strengthen the support environment for women entrepreneurs. To date, 252 professional women have participated in these trainings. Over the years, the training scheme has not only played an important role in strengthening the support for women entrepreneurship but has also facilitated networking among women entrepreneurs across Central Asia.

In March 2011, the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre and the UNECE, within the framework of the activities of the SPECA PWG on KBD, organized a High-level Policy Seminar on Developing Innovative Entrepreneurship, which related to government policies aimed at fostering innovative enterprises. A part of the discussion was dedicated to the design and implementation of gender-sensitive policies in order to enhance the participation of women in the innovation process.

Assessments of the business environment for women entrepreneurs

With the financial support of the Governments of Finland and Sweden two assessments of the business environment for women entrepreneurs were conducted in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in 2010-2011. These assessments generate new knowledge and improve our understanding of the gender differences in the perception of the business environment and of gender-specific factors and constraints to entrepreneurship development. They complement previous research undertaken in cooperation with the International Labour Organization to analyze the achievements and perspectives of women’s entrepreneurship development in pilot countries in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) with the purpose of developing policy recommendations for the improvement and further development of entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the region.

A national workshop was organized in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in May 2011 to consult key stakeholder groups on women’s entrepreneurship development and to share preliminary research findings of the study on the business environment for women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan.

A policy seminar on women’s entrepreneurship development in Central Asia was organized in Geneva on 19 September 2011 to disseminate the findings of the research, to identify gender gaps in entrepreneurship and to discuss the policy measures needed to increase women’s economic opportunities in the region. The seminar brought together 40 policymakers and representatives from women’s business associations, finance institutions and international and regional institutions active in Central Asia. The documentation for the policy seminar is available on the UNECE website (www.unece.org/gender/policyseminar). The seminar was organized in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme Regional Office for Europe and CIS in Bratislava with the active participation of the members of the WG.

SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013
(Ongoing, planned and possible UNECE and ESCAP activities in support of
the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA))

PART I

WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

In light of a large degree of interdependence of most of the SPECA member countries, efficient use of water and energy resources on mutually agreed and beneficial terms is critical for economic and social development in the region and meeting basic human needs of its populations. The theme of Water and Energy was among the initial work areas of SPECA and is addressed through the Project Working Group on Water and Energy Resources. Earlier work has resulted in the elaboration of the Strategy for the Rational and Efficient Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia.

Ongoing projects contribute to the implementation of the SPECA Strategy as well as form part of the Work Programme of the UNECE Water Convention. They include work on water information and water quality, dam safety, development of cooperation on the Chu and Talas rivers. However, it is not clear whether the water information and water quality work will continue in 2012-2013.

The Programme “Trans-boundary Water Management in Central Asia” was launched in 2008 by the Government of Germany. A Programme component “Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management” is being implemented by the UNECE. The first phase of the Programme will be concluded in December 2011. It included work on regional institutions, international water legislation and regional guidelines / principles for water management, as well as development of monitoring and information exchange. Discussion on its continuation between 2012 and 2014 is ongoing.

Activities under the UNECE Sustainable Energy Work Programme in the region are also contributing to the implementation of the SPECA Strategy. They include work on renewable energy development, financing energy efficiency for climate change mitigation, energy efficiency market formation and support to energy efficiency capacity-building, as well as climate change mitigation through attracting foreign direct investment in advanced fossil fuel technologies.

The project “Mitigating climate change through attracting foreign direct investment in advanced fossil fuel technologies” was launched by UNECE in 2010 in cooperation with ESCAP and UN DESA. In 2011, UNCTAD joined the project as cooperating Agency. Participating countries: Afghanistan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The Project will continue to be implemented in 2012 and include work on increasing interregional cooperation to overcome existing barriers to the investment in advanced fossil fuel technologies in Central Asia.

The SPECA Governing Council in May 2006 in Baku decided that the proposals for a Coordinated SPECA Energy System and the Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency and Conservation be

submitted to the Project Working Group (PWG) on Water and Energy Resources for consideration and reporting to the next Coordinating Committee. The SPECA Coordinating Committee met in December 2006 in Dushanbe, following the PWG session, which reviewed the two proposals extensively and recommended the approval of those projects. The SPECA Coordinating Committee subsequently endorsed the recommendations of the PWG.

In 2009, ESCAP initiated two projects to implement two of these recommendations and is seeking funding for initiating a third project. Specifically, projects “Eco-efficient and sustainable urban infrastructure development in Asia and Latin America” and the “Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment” include a component on sustainable building design and an initial study is being undertaken in Tajikistan. The project “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Support Energy Efficiency in Selected Asian Countries” focuses on three subregions in Asia, one of which is Central Asia. The purpose of this project is to strengthen institutional capacity and develop policy options to support the promotion of energy efficiency.

In 2011, UNECE has initiated two projects addressing the Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency and Conservation. The project “Analysis of Advanced Technologies in Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the framework of the Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project and Preparation of Recommendations on its Application with Special Emphasis on SPECA Region” will be implemented in 2011-2013. The overall objective is to develop a more systematic exchange of experience on capacity-building, policy reforms and investment project finance among countries of the other regions of the world through their UN Regional Commissions in order to promote advanced energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to raise economic productivity, diminish fuel poverty and reduce environmental pollution such as greenhouse gas emissions.

The overall objective of the project “Enhancing Synergies in CIS National Programmes on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving for Greater Energy Security” is to support the development of energy efficiency and energy saving common programmes designed to reduce the domestic consumption of energy in the CIS countries in order to enhance their energy security. The project will be implemented in the period 2011-2013.

In 2012–2013, the following projects and activities are envisaged:

WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Dam safety in Central Asia: capacity-building and subregional cooperation (in cooperation with UNDP and OSCE)	2012-2014	US\$ 100,000 for 2012-2014 (Governments of Finland and the Russian Federation)
Third project phase “Development of Cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers” (in cooperation with OSCE)	2012-2014	Fund-raising ongoing
Promoting cooperation to adapt to climate change in the Chu-Talas transboundary basin	2010-2012	Euro 225,000 Funded by Finland
Second phase of the Programme “Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management in Central Asia”	2012-2013	US\$ 700,000 Fund-raising ongoing

<p>“Mitigating climate change through attracting foreign direct investment in advanced fossil fuel technologies” project (UNECE in cooperation with ESCAP and UN DESA and UNCTAD) Financing energy efficiency for climate change mitigation (UNECE in cooperation with UNDP)</p>	2010-2012	US\$ 629,000 UN Development Account
<p>UNECE: “Analysis of Advanced Technologies in Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the Framework of the Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project and Preparation of Recommendations on its application with special emphasis on the SPECA region”</p>	2007-2014	Kazakhstan is the only SPECA country eligible to participate. Other SPECA member countries will be invited to training workshops and policy seminars as an outreach activity
<p>UNECE: “Enhancing Synergies in CIS National Programmes on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving for Greater Energy Security”</p>	2011-2013	US\$ 150,000 Funded by the Russian Federation
<p>ESCAP under the Baku Initiative on Energy Efficiency and Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Support Energy Efficiency in Selected Asian Countries” (KEMCO) • “Eco-efficient and Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Development in Asia and Latin America” (United Nations Development Account) • “Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment” (Kitakyushu Initiative) 	2009-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KEMCO (US\$ 50,000 approximately for Central Asia) • Development Account (US\$ 74,000 for Central Asia and Mongolia) • Kitakyushu Initiative (US\$ 25,000 for Central Asia and Mongolia) • Funding sought from the Russian Federation for implementation of activities in 2010 <p>Funding sought from GEF, the Russian Federation and other donors for implementation of activities beyond 2011</p>
<p>ESCAP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of the online database of policy and legal frameworks for energy efficiency and clean energy technologies in North and Central Asia. 2. Conduct an assessment study on energy efficiency potential and market opportunities in North and Central Asia. 3. Conduct an assessment study on development a market for energy efficiency and clean energy technologies at the subregional level in North and Central Asia and potentially with North-East Asia or other subregions. 4. Capacity-building for enhanced energy cooperation and better understanding of issues related to energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies of market development, financing of energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects, 	2011-2012	Russian Federation

through organization of group trainings. 5. Updating the status of water resources and services management in a consultancy to be completed in February 2012, as part of ESCAP strategy for future work. 6. Working together with partners, such as UNU, to assess the capacity-building needs of the Asia Pacific region, including Central Asia.		
Possible projects/activities in areas where UNECE/ESCAP have considerable experience and in-house expertise and which could be implemented if supported by interested donors/partners. These projects could be implemented in addition to and in coordination with projects/activities listed above		
Coordinated SPECA Energy System	2010-2015	Funding being sought Estimated budget US\$ 500,000
Trans-Asian Energy System	2010-2015	Funding being sought Estimated budget US\$ 500,000
Wind energy resources assessment and technology demonstration	2010-2012	Funding being sought Estimated budget US\$ 648,900
Network of national energy efficiency centres in Central Asia (UNECE in cooperation with ESCAP and CAREC)	2012-2013	Funding being sought Estimated budget US\$ 200,000
Water quality in the AmuDarya basin	2012-2015	US\$ 1.200,000 Fund-raising ongoing
Strengthening implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and enhancing transboundary cooperation in Central Asia	2012-2015	US\$ 2.900,000 Fund-raising ongoing

TRANSPORT

The annual sessions of the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing serve as an effective cooperation mechanism to address the specific problems of transit transport from, in and through SPECA member countries. Improvement of international transit transport infrastructure and services, as recognized in the Almaty Programme of Action, will facilitate further integration of SPECA member countries into the world economy. The ESCAP resolution 63/9 on Implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme, Phase I (2007-2011) reiterated its support for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action for the benefit of landlocked and transit developing countries.

The 16th session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC) held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 20-21 April 2011 adopted its Programme of Work for 2012-2013, which includes: organization of regular sessions of the SPECA PWG and bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues between SPECA member countries; implementation of subregional projects of common interest to SPECA countries and development of SPECA Transport databases, identification and isolation of bottlenecks, establishment / strengthening of national facilitation and coordinating mechanisms, enhancement of legal frameworks for transport facilitation and accession to multilateral agreements, investment promotion, making operational of

transport corridors, simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures, including through ICT, and road safety issues.

TRANSPORT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Organization of regular sessions of the SPECA PWG-TBC, including Bilateral consultations on border crossing issues between SPECA member countries	One per year	UN Regular budget (RPTC)
Development and implementation of subregional project proposals of common interest to SPECA member countries with an increased collaboration and interactions at the regional and national levels to address transport issues in and across the SPECA region and to promote investment in transport infrastructure and operation of transport corridors in the SPECA region, and promotion of demonstration runs through the SPECA road and rail networks, through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNECE project on developing Euro-Asian Transport Links (Phase II) • Development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal and transit transport along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, and promotion of logistics in the ESCAP region 	2009-2012	US\$ 180,000
	2009-2012	US\$ 270,000
Identification and isolation of major bottlenecks impeding smooth and efficient international transport in the SPECA region through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCAP/UNCTAD/ECA UNDA joint project "Capacity-building for Control Authorities and Transport Operators to Improve Efficiency of Cross-Border Transport in Landlocked and Transit Countries" (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) 	2011-2013	US\$ 533,000
Simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport and the application of new technologies, including information and communication technology, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops for the adoption of Unified Railway Law to be used by SPECA • Workshops for simplification and harmonization of border-crossing procedures and application of new technologies 	2012-2013	US\$ 150,000
	2012-2013	US\$ 100,000

Establishment or strengthening of national facilitation coordinating mechanisms for improved collaboration between all stakeholders involved in international transport from the public and private sectors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring transport performance in SPECA member countries based on a new UNECE developed methodology • ESCAP workshop and advisory services 	2012	US\$ 150,000
	2012	US\$ 60,000
Enhancement of legal frameworks for international transport to reflect suitable legal regimes for international land transport facilitation, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance to SPECA member countries in the field of international transport of dangerous goods • ESCAP assistance in implementation of SCO Road Facilitation Agreement 	2012-2013	US\$ 120,000
	2012-2013	US\$ 200,000
Capacity-building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia	2010-2011 (implementation to be continued beyond 2011)	Estimated Budget US\$ 200,000
Increased awareness and understanding of road safety issues and potential interventions, and improved collaboration in the SPECA region, of which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars on UN Regulations on vehicle safety and on periodical technical inspection of vehicles in view of accession of SPECA member countries to UNECE Agreements (1997 Agreement: Periodical technical inspections; 1958 Agreement: Uniform technical prescriptions for vehicles and parts and conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals) 	Upon request	UN Regular budget (RPTC)
	2012	US\$ 570,000

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

The fifth session of the SPECA Project Working Group (PWG) on Trade took place on 2 December 2010 in Baku, Azerbaijan, immediately following the Aid-for-Trade Roadmap for SPECA Ministerial Meeting on 1-2 December 2011. Some of the countries were represented on a Ministerial level and several development partners participated in the meeting (e.g. ESCAP, ITC, IDB and ITFC, UNDP, UNECE, UNIDO, etc.). The participants confirmed that, in the future, the SPECA PWG on Trade is expected to become the institutional backbone for the SPECA Aid-for-Trade Initiative. New projects were identified: in support of regional cooperation for trade policy formulation and WTO accession (ESCAP); follow-up to previous projects on trade facilitation and the Single Window (UNECE); accession to the UNCITRAL instruments on e-commerce (UNCITRAL); and others.

The SPECA PWG on Trade Work Plan reflects the findings of the needs assessments carried out by UNDP and the resulting matrices of national and regional trade development priorities. Emphasis has been placed on the creation of synergies with other projects and agencies working in trade, such as UNDP, ITC, IDB and ITFC, UNIDO, UNCTAD, GIZ, USAID, ADB and others, as well as on the strengthening of work on standardization and on capacity-building to support export diversification. The recommendations of the Baku Ministerial Declaration are fundamental for the future work plans of the PWG on Trade, notably the regional priority given to work in the areas of: (1) supply-side measures (such as productive capacity and market development, reinforcement of trade-support institutions, and regulatory reforms); (2) cross-border cooperation to improve the physical and institutional infrastructure and market access; and (3) facilitating the integration of the SPECA member countries in the multilateral trading system. The Ministerial Declaration also called for the establishment of a SPECA AfT Implementation and Monitoring Council, which would work in close cooperation with the SPECA PWG on Trade.

Activities in the Work Programme of the PWG on Trade for 2012-2013 are focused on projects for which funding is either already available or is expected: (1) trade facilitation and trade policy development (7th tranche of the UNDA and extrabudgetary projects, notably the Russian voluntary contribution projects for trade facilitation in the Customs Union of EurAsEC and trade development needs assessment for Kazakhstan); (2) capacity-building for agricultural product standards (Russian voluntary contribution); (3) regional cooperation on trade policy (including WTO accession and concluding RTAs) and development through the SPECA Network on Trade Cooperation; (4) private sector development with focus on SMEs development and investment promotion and facilitation (currently under development); and other activities. The sixth session of the SPECA PWG on Trade will adopt the Work Plan for 2012-2013 which is proposed as follows:

TRADE DEVELOPMENT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Strengthening the capacity of developing and transition economies to link to the global supply chains (UNDA 7 th Tranche Project) (UNECE lead agency)	2011-2013	US\$ 55,000
SPECA Network on Trade Cooperation (ESCAP lead agency) (part of UNDA 8 th Tranche Project on MDGs)	2012-2013	US\$ 48,000
Support for Trade Facilitation and Single Window projects in the Customs Union of EurAsEC	2012-2013	US\$ 80,000
Capacity-building for the implementation of international agricultural quality standards in the Central Asian countries	2012-2013	appr. US\$ 20,000
Trade facilitation and regulatory environment needs assessment for Kazakhstan (UNECE and ITC joint project)	2012-2013	US\$ 60,000 (partly for SPECA)
Capacity development of the private sector: SME development and promotion/facilitation of FDI (ESCAP lead agency; donors to be approached)	2012-2014	US\$ 1.000,000 (tentatively)

STATISTICAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

In 2012-2013, UNECE capacity-building activities in the SPECA region will continue to focus on relevant areas, such as national accounts, short-term economic statistics, MDG indicators, population and housing censuses, gender statistics, migration statistics, measuring violence against women, environment and sustainable development. This will be achieved by promoting the exchange at subregional level of national good practices, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of an active network of experts. At the request of the countries, these activities will be complemented by advisory missions from UNECE experts. Experts from SPECA member countries will be encouraged to participate in all activities under the umbrella of the Conference of European Statisticians and the SPECA PWG on Statistics. As requested at the 2011 meeting of the SPECA PWG on Statistics, the UNECE Statistical Division is developing three capacity-building programmes in the field of Economic Statistics, Regional Migration Statistics and Streamlining Statistical Production. These projects are fully demand-driven but the major challenge will be to raise funds for their implementation.

The UNECE, in cooperation with Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), will continue global assessments (GA) of the national statistical systems of SPECA member countries. To ensure effective delivery of its technical cooperation activities, the subprogramme will continue to forge partnerships at different levels, in particular with ESCAP, UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, OECD, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, PARIS21, SIAP, the World Bank, IMF, WHO and other international organizations.

STATISTICAL CAPACITY-BUILDING		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Strengthening statistical and inter-institutional capacities for monitoring the MDGs through interregional cooperation and knowledge-sharing	2010-2012	UNDA 7th tranche US\$ 152,000
Enhancing key statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals	2010-2013	UNDA 7th tranche tbc
Streamlining statistical production To raise awareness of new statistical production tools and to offer solutions for improving production processes and reducing respondent burden	2011-2012	Extrabudgetary funds US\$ 80,000
UNECE Capacity-building Programme on New Challenges in Economic Statistics in the Central Asian Countries	2009-2012	World Bank TFSCB to UNECE US\$ 355,000

Strengthening statistical capacity of countries with economies in transition to assess progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goal on Environmental Sustainability and provide data on environmental vulnerabilities	2012-2014	UNDA 7th tranche US\$ 391,000
Interregional Cooperation to Strengthen National Capacities to Measure Progress in Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	2012-2013	UNDA 8th tranche: US\$ 677,000
Global assessments of national statistical systems of the SPECA member countries	Ongoing	UN Regular budget (RPTC) US\$ 20,000/year
Possible projects/activities in areas where UNECE/ESCAP have considerable experience and in-house expertise and which could be implemented if supported by interested donors/partners. These projects could be implemented in addition to and in coordination with projects/activities listed above.		
Capacity-building programme on adapting economic statistics to new prerequisites of the market economy, including implementation of the UN System of National Accounts 2008	2013-2016	As requested by the SPECA PWG on Statistics Fund-raising: US\$ 620,000 (full project)
Strengthening statistics on regional migration	2013-2016	As requested by the SPECA PWG on Statistics Fund-raising: US\$ 991,000 (full project)
Modernizing Statistical Production	2013-2016	As requested by the SPECA PWG on Statistics Fund-raising: US\$ 720,000 (full project)

KNOWLEDGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT

The activities to be carried out by the PWG on Knowledge-based development are demand-driven, focused on priority topics and matched with available resources.

Activities envisaged for 2012-2013

1. Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development

Objectives: To strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA member countries to advance knowledge-based development by developing relevant substantive skills, increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved and promoting regional cooperation.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Organization of a regional/subregional capacity-building event on knowledge-based development, possibly in conjunction with annual session of the PWG on KBD (tentatively envisaged for 2013);

- (ii) Participation of experts from SPECA member countries in UNECE policy-oriented meetings and capacity-building events on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners; and
- (iii) Policy advisory services and other events promoting knowledge-based development at the request of Governments of SPECA member countries, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funding.

2. Capacity-building on the adoption and application of innovative clean technologies for climate change adaptation and sustainable knowledge-driven growth

Objectives: To strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA member countries to adopt and apply innovative clean technologies for climate change adaptation and sustainable knowledge-driven growth. The project aims to strengthen national policymakers' capacity to design effective innovation policy for clean technology take-up and diffusion; to understand the different financial mechanisms to facilitate the financing of specific clean technology projects, including through Public-Private Partnerships; and to mainstream climate change considerations into the policy mix to create an appropriate enabling environment.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Preparation of country assessments of participating countries' clean technology needs, climate action and innovation policies, and financing options for take-up and diffusion of clean technologies (tentatively envisaged for 2012);
- (ii) Organization of a regional/subregional project initiation meeting for policymakers of SPECA member countries (tentatively envisaged for 2013); and
- (iii) Organization of national capacity-building seminars on the adoption and application of clean technologies for climate change adaptation and sustainable knowledge-driven growth, covering issues related to innovation policy, climate change policy; and financing (tentatively envisaged for 2013).

3. Capacity-building on ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness

Objectives: To empower senior decision makers with relevant ICT policy knowledge and expertise in promoting innovation-based competitiveness and eCommerce development.

Proposed activities: Organization of a regional/national capacity-building event on ICT policy and regulatory framework for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce (upon request).

4. Strengthening regional knowledge and capacity of ESCAP Member States in policies and strategies in disaster risk reduction for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development

Objectives: To build a regional knowledge base for improved disaster risk reduction and increase awareness of policymakers of emerging disaster risks and related socio-economic implications to address gaps and priorities in future disaster risk reduction strategies.

The effectiveness of disaster risk management depends greatly on countries knowledge and improved availability of information and analytical capabilities in assessing the benefits of disaster risk reduction and the effects of disasters. With a focus on building a regional knowledge base for improved disaster risk reduction, the project will develop and make available information and

knowledge to strengthen the capacity of policymakers and government officials to formulate strategies and policies to reduce the risk of disasters.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Preparation of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012 on emerging disaster risks and socio-economic implications as well as best practices and lessons learned in various aspects of disaster risk reduction and management in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- (ii) Development the Asia-Pacific Gateway on Disaster Risk Reduction and Development as a knowledge management platform for disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region to promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning.

5. Strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms in ICTs and disaster risk reduction for development

Objectives: To strengthen regional cooperation for capacity development in support of effective disaster risk reduction and development, with emphasis on extreme weather-related events such as drought and floods.

Though there are advancements in Information, Communication and Space Technologies (ICSTs) and their applications, there exists significant digital divides. Effective access and use of satellite-based resources can enhance response efforts by providing valuable information and services, including remote sensing, communication and navigational information. Strengthened regional cooperation can enhance sharing and access to information and capacities to use them for disaster risk reduction and management.

Proposed activities:

Prepare relevant documents and organize capacity development training, seminars and/or workshops to access and utilize the space-based products, information and services available through strengthened regional cooperation and networking for disaster risk management and development.

6. Enhancing National Capacities to Use ICTs for Socio-Economic Development

Objectives: To enhance the capacities of policymakers, government officials and other relevant stakeholders to utilize ICTs for achieving national development goals.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Russian version of two new training Modules developed by APCICT as part of its flagship ICT for development (ICTD) capacity-building programme called the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders” (Academy) will be launched in 2012. These include Module 9 (ICT for Disaster Risk Reduction) and Module 10 (ICT and Climate Change).
- (ii) A Subregional Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on Academy Module 9 and Module 10 will be organized in the Russian language for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. The workshop will be organized in partnership with the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SONCA), and is tentatively scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan in May 2012. It will help expand the pool of local resource persons and will be followed by a series of national level workshops in countries, such as Azerbaijan.

- (iii) Provincial level ICTD training of officials will be conducted in Tajikistan in 2012, utilizing the Tajik language version of the Academy Modules 1-8 already launched in 2011.
- (iv) APCICT will launch two sets of ICTD case studies from CIS countries. These case studies will be used to customize and complement the Academy training modules so that the trainees can better appreciate the learning in their own contexts.
- (v) APCICT will provide advisory services to the ICT Council in Tajikistan for building and strengthening national institutions in the area of ICT.
- (vi) APCICT will also conduct another subregional TOT for academicians and resource persons from the CIS countries aimed at raising the awareness of students and youth, who comprise the workforce of the future, about the potential of ICTs to promote socio-economic development. This will be part of an APCICT initiative titled “Turning Today’s Youth into Tomorrow’s Leaders”. The TOT will utilize the Russian version of a new learning resource developed by APCICT especially for universities and educational institutions. Ministries of education and ICT as well as universities from CIS countries will be engaged in development of national strategies for utilization of the learning resource.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT		
Area of Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development (UNECE)	2012-2013	UNECE extrabudgetary funds
Capacity-building on the adoption and application of innovative clean technologies for climate change adaptation and sustainable knowledge-driven growth (UNECE)	2012-2013	UNDA
Capacity-building on ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness (UNECE)	2012-2013	UNECE extrabudgetary funds
Strengthening regional knowledge and capacity of ESCAP Member States in policies and strategies in disaster risk reduction for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development (ESCAP)	2012-2013	ESCAP extrabudgetary funds
Strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms in ICTs and disaster risk reduction for development (ESCAP)	2012-2013	ESCAP extrabudgetary funds
Enhancing national capacities to use ICTs for socio-economic development (ESCAP/APCICT)	2012-2013	APCICT extrabudgetary funds Co-funding by ESCAP donors/partners

GENDER AND ECONOMY

A key challenge for the SPECA Working Group in Gender and Economy is securing funds for joint project activities. The UNECE secretariat developed two project proposals in 2010 and 2011. These were discussed and approved by the Working Group at its meeting on 20 September 2011 and are presented in more detail below.

Planned activities for 2012-2013

Capacity-building

Building on the successful cooperation with the Centre for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre since 2006, training workshops in support of women's entrepreneurship in Central Asia are expected to be continued in 2012 and 2013.

Forum for Women Entrepreneurs

UNECE plans to hold a region-wide forum for women entrepreneurs in 2012. Women entrepreneurs from SPECA member countries will be invited to actively participate.

Fund-raising for new project activities

Funds are currently sought for two projects proposals outlined below which could be implemented by the Working Group in 2012-2013:

1. Strengthening institutional support for women entrepreneurs through business associations in SPECA member countries

The proposed project would contribute to strengthening an enabling business environment for women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region through a capacity-building and networking programme. It would cover four subregional training workshops for women business associations in the SPECA region. These workshops would strengthen the capacity of women's business associations to: (1) advocate the needs of business women to policymakers, and (2) provide business training and support services to women entrepreneurs in their respective countries.

2. Enhancing the capacity of governments in Central Asia and the South Caucasus to mainstream gender in economic policies

The project would develop and provide tailored gender trainings for economic policymakers. While gender trainings have become more wide-spread across the region, they are often only offered on an ad hoc basis. In order to achieve gender-sensitive economic policies, it is important to integrate gender trainings into existing training curricula for policymakers on a permanent basis. This project would address this challenge in three steps: first, by developing a training module which is tailored to the practical needs of economic policymakers; second, by delivering trainings to government trainers to use the module, who would then, in a third step, train economic policymakers to formulate and implement gender-sensitive policies.

GENDER AND ECONOMY

Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe
Training workshops on support systems for women in small business to strengthen the business environment for women's entrepreneurship in Central Asia, Haifa, Israel	2012-2013
Two training workshops on the use of information and communication technologies targeted at women entrepreneurs in Central Asia	2012-2013
Fund-raising for new project activities	2012
Region-wide Women's Entrepreneurship Forum	2012

SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013
(Planned and possible UNECE and ESCAP activities in support
of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
(SPECA))

PART II

The SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013 (Part II) includes the projects presented at the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum “Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia” which was organized jointly by the Government of Turkmenistan and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 7-8 June 2011. Some of the projects presented at the Follow-up meeting are integrated into the regular SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013 (Part I).

WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Project Title	Strengthening cooperation on transboundary watershed management between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in the upper AmuDarya river basin	
Outcome	The overall objective of the proposed UNECE project is to improve cross-border environmental and water resource management in the upper AmuDarya basin between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Republic of Tajikistan. It is expected that this project will show the feasibility of using the Tajik-Afghan cooperation to improve information availability on the upper AmuDarya basin. If this is so, a full-scale follow-up project will be designed.	
Indicative Funding Requirements	Total estimated budget:	US\$ 150,000
Sources of Funding	Donor: Russian Federation	US\$ 150,000

Project Title	Lifting Afghanistan to become an equal riparian member within the AmuDarya basin	
Outcome	The overall objective of the proposed project is lift Afghanistan out of the identified knowledge gap on its water resources and therefore enable it to participate in sustainable water resources development and management in the AmuDarya basin.	
Indicative Funding Requirements	Total estimated budget:	US\$ 1.825,000

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Project Title	Support for developing free trade agreement(s) between Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours	
Outcome	Increased capacity of Afghanistan and its northern neighbours to develop and implement free trade agreement(s) with harmonized clauses.	
Indicative Funding Requirements	Total estimated budget:	US\$ 280,000

DECISIONS OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE SPECA GOVERNING COUNCIL

(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 11 November 2011)

Decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/1)

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum “Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia” held in Ashgabat on 7 and 8 June 2011 and the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum “20 Years of Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Central Asia: Successes, Challenges and Prospects” held in Ashgabat on 10 and 11 November 2011, and proposes to take them into consideration in further activities. In particular, it encourages the Project Working Groups to consider with priority the prospects of implementing projects contained in the SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013 that focus on the building of human and institutional capacities for strengthened regional cooperation in Central Asia with the participation of Afghanistan.

Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/2)

The Governing Council requests the UNECE and ESCAP to prepare a report on the outcomes of the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum and present it in writing to SPECA National Coordinators and, through them, to the relevant ministries and agencies of SPECA member countries by 1 February 2012.

Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/3)

The Governing Council notes with appreciation the Progress Reports on the work carried out by the Project Working Groups. It expresses satisfaction with the broad scope of activities undertaken within the framework of the Project Working Groups.

Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/4)

The Governing Council approves the SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013 as presented to the session and amended by delegates. It encourages SPECA member countries, Project Working Groups, the donor community and partner organizations to actively support the implementation of projects contained in the Work Plan.

Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/5)

The Governing Council welcomes the progress made in strengthening cooperation between SPECA and other programmes and organizations in providing support to regional economic cooperation in Central Asia. The Governing Council invites UNECE and ESCAP and their partner organizations to continue developing close cooperation, including further development and implementation of joint projects.

Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/6)

The Governing Council welcomes the opening of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia. The Governing Council expresses its hope that the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia will provide effective support to the implementation of the SPECA Work Plans as well as coordination and cooperation with partner organizations and institutions.

Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/7)

The Governing Council reiterates its support to the proposal to nominate SPECA contact points in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of member countries who would assist SPECA National Coordinators by facilitating liaison and communication with relevant national ministries and partners, and invites the SPECA member countries to convey the name and contact details of SPECA contact points to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats.

Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/8)

The Governing Council encourages the UNECE and ESCAP to provide active support through SPECA, in its capacity as member of the High-Level Core Group of RECCA, to the preparation and conduct of the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe.

Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/9)

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the secretariat of ESCAP for its invitation to host the seventh session of the Governing Council and the 2012 SPECA Economic Forum in Bangkok in 2012.

Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/10)

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to Turkmenistan for the active work as the Chair of SPECA in 2011 and welcomes its readiness to continue chairing the Programme in 2012.

Decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/11)

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan for the excellent organization and generous hospitality offered to the participants of the Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum, the 2011 SPECA Economic Forum and the sixth session of the SPECA Governing Council.

Decision 12 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2011/12)

The Governing Council expresses its deep appreciation to the secretariats of UNECE and ESCAP and their Executive Secretaries for their efforts in organizing these important annual events, and also expresses its special appreciation for their active work aimed at strengthening SPECA and continued strong support to Programme implementation.