



Inauguration Session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-Based Development

(Baku, Azerbaijan, 12 November 2008) ¹

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

Background and objectives of the session

The Governing Council of SPECA at its second session (Berlin, 14 November 2007) in the decision (SPECA/GC/Dec/2007/4)² supported the proposal to broaden the mandate of the Project Working Group on ICT for Development and to transform it into the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD).

The Governing Council agreed that the PWG on KBD could become a useful forum for exchanges of experience and best practice, as well as capacity-building in such areas as economic competitiveness and innovative development, attracting financial resources in support of the innovative sectors of economy, commercialization and protection of intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships, in addition to already ongoing work in the area of ICT for Development. In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Governing Council stressed that the activities to be carried out in addition to those related to ICT for Development, should be demand-driven, focused on a limited number of priority topics and matched with available resources.

The Governing Council in general agreed with the draft Terms of Reference of the PWG. The Governing Council welcomed the interest of Azerbaijan to continue Co-Chairmanship of the PWG with a broadened mandate and invited other SPECA member countries to consider nominating the second Co-Chair of the Group.

The inauguration session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development is a follow-up to the request of the Governing Council which invited UNECE and ESCAP to organize the first session of the PWG on KBD in 2008. During the inauguration session, the PWG on KBD is expected to approve its broadened Terms of Reference and agree on priority activities to be included in its programme of work in areas other than ICT for Development. The PWG on KBD is also expected to discuss and approve its Programme of Work for 2009.

¹ Venue of the session: Hotel “Hyatt Regency Baku”, 1 Bakikhanov Street

² The decision was adopted through a “silent procedure” in absence of any objections submitted by SPECA member countries by the agreed deadline of 10 December 2007.

Following the recommendations made by the Governing Council, UNECE will organize a capacity-building seminar focused on the ICT policy and legal issues, with special reference to eCommerce development, in conjunction with the inauguration session of the PWG on KBD.

1. Opening of the Session

Welcome Statement by **H.E. Mr. Elmir Velizadeh**, Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Opening Statement by **Mr. Andrey Vasilyev**, Director, Economic Cooperation and Integration Division (ECID), UNECE

Statement by **Mr. Xuan Zengpei**, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP

2. Election of officers and adoption of the agenda

3. Approval of the Terms of Reference of the SPECA PWG on KBD

The Governing Council of SPECA at the second session (Berlin, 14 November 2007) in its decision supported the proposal to broaden the mandate of the Project Working Group on ICT for Development and to transform it into the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD). The Governing Council in principle agreed with the Terms of Reference of the PWG on KBD and invited the Group to approve them and agree on priority activities to be included in its programme of work.

4. Substantive Segment

- (a) Activities carried out by the PWG on ICT for Development in 2006, 2007 and within the framework of the PWG on KBD during 2008. Report by **Ms. Michiko Enomoto**, Secretary to the PWG on ICT for Development and to the PWG on KBD at UNECE.
- (b) Introduction of possible thematic areas which could be covered by the SPECA PWG on KBD with a focus on the latest findings and recommendations adopted by the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration. Presentation on possible related capacity-building activities which could be carried out for the benefit of SPECA member countries in the future by **Mr. Roumen Dobrinski**, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECID, UNECE.

It is envisaged that the following thematic areas will be introduced under (b):

- Innovation and Competitiveness Policies for Innovative Development

- Financing Innovative Development
 - Entrepreneurship in Innovative Firms
 - Commercialization and Protection of Intellectual Property Rights
 - Public-Private Partnerships
- (c) Presentation on possible future ICT-related activities to be undertaken by the SPECA PWG on KBD by **Mr. Cihat Basocak**, Information Technology Officer, IDD, ESCAP.

5. Adoption of the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2009

- (a) Presentation on the possible structuring of the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2009 and beyond by **Mr. Andrey Vasilyev**, Director, Economic Cooperation and Integration Division (ECID), UNECE.
- (b) Presentation on the possible structuring of the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2009 and beyond by **Mr. Xuan Zengpei**, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP.
- (c) Proposals by country representatives on the thematic focus and activities to be included in the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2009.

The country representatives will be invited to make proposals on the thematic focus and activities to be included in the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2009. The representatives are also encouraged to indicate their interests in hosting regional/national capacity-building events and other related technical cooperation activities to be organised by the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats within their areas of expertise and available resources. The representatives could submit concrete capacity-building proposals based on the need of the countries to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats for the preparation of future capacity-building activities.

- (d) Presentation by bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations on possible ways of improving the international cooperation in the provision of technical assistance in the area of knowledge-based development to the SPECA member countries.

The representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations will be encouraged to express their views on possible ways of improving the international cooperation in the provision of technical assistance in the area of knowledge-based development to the SPECA member countries, taking into account a possible role of the SPECA PWG on KBD to coordinate, review and/or promote individual projects.

6. Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development

In order to facilitate follow-up activities in the area of knowledge-based development (KBD), it has been suggested to establish a network of SPECA policymakers on KBD. The representatives of the SPECA member countries will be invited to discuss this proposal and the modality on establishing the network and its functioning.

Ms. Michiko Enomoto, Secretary to the SPECA PWG on KBD at UNECE, will make a presentation on the Information Exchange Platform developed by UNECE. SPECA policymakers on KBD could utilize this on-line tool to exchange information both among themselves and with a large international network of experts and to submit requests for capacity-building activities.

7. Date and venue for the next session of the SPECA PWG on KBD

The representatives of SPECA member countries will be invited to express interests in hosting the second session of the PWG on KBD with a view to taking a decision on the date and venue of the next session of the Group.

8. Other business

The Group may wish to consider any other matter that may be brought to its attention.

9. Closing of the Session

* * * * *

Note: On 13 and 14 November 2008, there will be the Regional Seminar on Information and Communication Technology Policy and Legal Issues – with Special Reference to eCommerce Development organized by UNECE. The Seminar is designed for delegates attending the inauguration session of the PWG on KBD, as well as additional national representatives and experts from Azerbaijan.

The Seminar is a capacity-building initiative to support policymakers of SPECA member countries in relation to the activities of the newly created PWG on KBD.