

ESCAP

United Nations Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia  
and the Pacific



UNECE

United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe

## REPORT

**Third Session of the SPECA Project Working Group  
on Knowledge-based Development  
30 September 2010  
Astana, Kazakhstan**

### I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD or PWG) reviewed the activities carried out/to be organized in 2010, as indicated in the reports presented by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), including the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The PWG on KBD appreciated the efforts made by ESCAP, UNECE and other partners in implementing the activities listed in the Programme of Work for 2010--2011, adopted at the second session of the PWG on KBD held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 9 November 2009.

2. The PWG recognized the role of ICT as an integral part of disaster risk reduction and management, therefore recommended the SPECA PWG on KBD to include knowledge-based disaster management issues into its work of programme.

3. The PWG discussed and adopted the Draft Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011 (Annex I). The Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011 would focus on capacity-building works in the following areas :

- a. **Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development, with the objective to** strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA member countries to advance knowledge-based development by developing relevant substantive skills and increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved;
- b. **Capacity-building on legal aspect of ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce, with objective to** empower senior decision makers with relevant ICT policy background in promoting innovation-based competitiveness and eCommerce development;
- c. **Strengthening capacity to forecast extreme weather events in Asia on the basis of ICT applications, with objectives to** strengthen the capacity of participating countries to prepare for natural hazards resulting from extreme weather events through the development of mechanisms for effective exchange of information on flood risk

reduction methodologies and good practices and promotion of regional cooperation on sharing of information and analysis capacities for the improved management of flood-related disaster risks in a changing climate;

- d. **Strengthening regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific on the basis of ICT applications, with the objective** to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms for sharing and analysis of information on disaster risk reduction and management;
- e. **Capacity-building on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders - National Roll-Outs and the APCICT Virtual Academy, with objective** to equip policymakers, senior officials, trainers and project managers with the essential ICT knowledge and skills to fully leverage opportunities presented by ICT to achieve national development goals and bridge the digital divide.

4. The PWG agreed the activities consulted with the secretariats of ESCAP, including APCICT, and UNECE could be taken as the basis for the implementation of its Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011, within the available resources. The PWG further encouraged them to explore additional financial and technical resources to support broader activities to meet the growing demands for capacity-building activities of the member countries within the themes covered by the PWG on KBD.

5. The PWG welcomed the work already carried out by the UNECE and its Information Exchange Platform, the web-based information sharing tools that were made available to the members of the **Network of SPECA policymakers on knowledge-based development**. The PWG requested the SPECA member countries to provide additional experts with contact details to be included in the established Network. It further suggested ESCAP, including APCICT, to contribute contents to enrich the SPECA section of the Information Exchange Platform.

6. SPECA member countries are encouraged to consider hosting the fourth session of the PWG on KBD and inform the secretariats of UNECE and ESCAP for arrangements.

7. The PWG agreed that secretariats of ESCAP and UNECE would prepare a draft report, in consultation with the Chairperson, and circulate it to the PWG participants for comments and for final adoption.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS**

### **A. Organization of the meeting**

8. The Third Session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD) took place at the Palace of Independence, Astana, Kazakhstan on 30 September 2010. The session was organized jointly by ESCAP and UNECE. In conjunction with the session, the Regional Workshop on ICT Applications for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Economic Development was organized back-to-back on 28-30 September 2010 in the same venue by ESCAP in cooperation with UNECE, as a parallel event of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development (MCED-6) organized by ESCAP from 27 September to 2 October 2010 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

### **B. Attendance**

9. The Third Session of the PWG on KBD was attended by representatives from the following SPECA member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Experts from India, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Japan, ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee,

WMO/ESCAP panel on Tropical Cyclone, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and United Nations University were also present as observers at the meeting. The list of participants is attached to this report (Annex II).

### **C. Opening of the session**

10. The opening session of the PWG was organized jointly with all parallel and side events of the MCED-6, on 30 September 2010 in the Palace of Independence.

11. Mr. Rae-Kwon Chung, Secretary of the MCED-6 and Director of the Environment and Development Division, on behalf of Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE, and H.E. Mr. Umirzak Shukeev, First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, delivered speeches at the joint opening session. In their addresses, the importance of cooperation among European and Asian countries was highlighted for the purpose of achieving the sustainable economic and social development of SPECA member countries.

12. After the joint opening session, a separate welcoming session for the PWG on KBD was organized. Mr. Xuan Zengpei, Chief, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division of ESCAP (IDD) and Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE made welcoming remarks to the participants of the PWG. In their remarks, the role of PWG on KBD in supporting national capacity-building and in enhancing regional cooperation in the area of knowledge-based development had been emphasized. They encouraged member countries to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the activities of PWG. They also requested to the participants to provide feedbacks and recommendations on the draft Programme of Work for 2011 to make it fully demand-driven.

13. Ms. Asel Turgunbaeva, Head, International Cooperation Division, Ministry of the Economic Regulation of the Kyrgyz Republic, was elected as the chairperson of the session.

14. The PWG adopted the following substantive agenda items for the session:

- Review of programme implementation in 2010
- Review and adoption of the programme of work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011
- Network of SPECA policymakers on knowledge-based development
- Date and venue for the next session of the SPECA PWG on KBD
- Other business

### **D. The session**

15. Under the agenda item on review of programme implementation in 2010, ESCAP and UNECE presented to the PWG on activities organized since the second session of the PWG in November 2009. The PWG appreciated the demand-driven activities already carried by ESCAP (including APCICT) and UNECE and for their efforts in developing projects and making them funded to support the implementation of the programme of the PWG.

16. Under the agenda item on review and adoption of the programme of work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011, ESCAP and UNECE made presentations to the PWG on their suggested focus areas of the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2011, and their plans of activities for implementation of the Programme of Work, based on their existing and expected financial and technical resources. SPECA member countries provided their feedbacks to ESCAP and UNECE to be included in the future work within the available resources. The PWG also

appreciated the offer made by participant from Pakistan on using its training facilities and opportunities to support the activities of the PWG on KBD.

17. Under the agenda item on Network of SPECA policymakers on knowledge-based development, UNECE presented to the PWG on the existing UNECE Information Exchange Platform, web-based networking tool which was made available to the policy makers and experts of the SPECA member countries. The SPECA member countries are encouraged to provide additional experts with their contact details to participate in this network. Further, the ESCAP, including APCICT, are encouraged to contribute contents to enrich the SPECA section of the Information Exchange Platform.

18. The PWG agreed that its member countries, who wish to host the next session of the SPECA PWG on KBD, would contact the secretariats of UNECE and ESCAP to determine the venue and date for the next session of the PWG on KBD.

19. The PWG appreciated the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the third session of the PWG on KBD, and its generous hospitalities extended to all the participants.

#### **E. Preparation and adoption of the report**

20. The PWG agreed that the draft report of the Third Session of the SPECA PWG on KBD would be prepared by the secretariats of ESCAP and UNECE in consultation with the Chairperson. It will then be circulated to the participants of the SPECA member countries by e-mail for further comments and for adoption.

21. The report was then adopted on 3 December 2010.

## **PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE SPECA PWG on KBD FOR 2011**

### **Background**

The Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD) supports capacity-building activities of its member countries in the following thematic areas: (i) ICT for development; (ii) promoting innovation and innovative development; (iii) supporting knowledge-based competitiveness; (iv) financing ICT infrastructure and innovative development; (v) commercialization and protection of intellectual property; and (vi) private-public partnerships.

The activities to be carried out by the PWG on KBD are demand-driven, focused on a limited number of priority topics and matched with available resources.

### **ACTIVITIES ENVISAGED FOR 2011**

#### **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 and increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved.

##### **Rationale**

The project is in line with the objectives of the PWG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation will be financed from the UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

##### **Proposed activities**

- (i) Regional/subregional capacity-building seminar on knowledge-based development with a focus on financing of innovative enterprises, commercialization of intellectual property, and Public and Private Partnerships (PPPs) to be organized in conjunction with the forth session of the PWG on KBD;
- (ii) Participation of SPECA experts in the UNECE capacity-building meetings and seminars on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners (UNECE region); and
- (iii) Participation of SPECA experts in UNECE policy-oriented meetings, expert seminars and capacity-building activities on promoting knowledge-based development (Geneva, Switzerland and other locations).

## **2. Capacity-building on legal aspect of ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce**

### **Objectives**

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

### **Rationale**

The project is in line with the objectives of the PWG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation will be financed from the UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

### **Proposed activities for 2011**

Regional/subregional capacity-building event on legal aspect of ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce (upon request).

## **3. Strengthening capacity to forecast extreme weather events in Asia**

**Objective:** To strengthen the capacity of participating countries to prepare for natural hazards resulting from extreme weather events through the development of mechanisms for effective exchange of information on flood risk reduction methodologies and good practices and promotion of regional cooperation on sharing of information and analysis capacities for the improved management of flood-related disaster risks in a changing climate

**Rationale:** Effective flood preparedness and enhanced regional cooperation on sharing of information and resources to prepare for natural hazards resulting from extreme weather events may greatly reduce the damages and losses caused by major flood disasters. The project implementation will be financed by extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP (subject to availability of funds from the Russian Federation).

### **Proposed activities for 2011:**

- Draft strategy towards a proposed draft framework for cooperation on sharing of information and analysis capacities in flood risk reduction in Central Asia based on needs of and consultations with participating countries.
- Multi-stakeholder subregional workshop to review the strategy and develop the draft framework for regional cooperation on sharing of information and analysis capacities in flood risk reduction and extreme weather events in Central Asia.

## **4. Strengthening regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific**

### **Objective:**

To strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms for sharing and analysis of information on disaster risk reduction and management.

### **Rationale:**

To make countries of the region more resilient to disasters through a cooperative mechanism on disaster monitoring and early warning, to enhance capacity-building and information sharing for all stakeholder beneficiary and contributory countries. With an initial focus on drought, the established mechanism framework can be explored for use to cover other disaster types. This project is funded by extra-budgetary resources provided to ESCAP from the Government of China.

### **Proposed activities for 2011:**

1) Regional Working Group meeting to review and report on the working modalities and arrangements agreed in the Stakeholder meeting that launched the Mechanism.

### **5. Capacity-building on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders - National Roll-Outs and the APCICT Virtual Academy**

#### **Objectives**

To equip policymakers, senior officials, trainers and project managers with the essential ICT knowledge and skills to fully leverage opportunities presented by ICT to achieve national development goals and bridge the digital divide.

#### **Rationale**

Many SPECA countries are at a nascent stage of ICT penetration and are not able to reap its benefits. The programme will support the objectives of the PWG on KBD by generating awareness amongst decision-makers in these countries on application of ICT to achieve the MDGs and bridge the digital divide. The project activities will be financed through the extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP.

### **Proposed activities for 2011**

- (i) Sub-regional Academy Training of Trainers workshop for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russian-speaking countries including SPECA countries. The TOT will help expand the pool of Russian-speaking resource persons who can deliver the Academy training and serve as advocates of the programme in their respective countries. In addition, national workshops are also intended to be organized where possible in partnership with national and sub-regional partners.
- (ii) Regional Training of Trainers workshop on new Academy modules on ICT for Disaster Risk Reduction (module 9), and Climate Change and ICT (module 10) including participation from SPECA member countries.
- (iii) Russian version of APCICT Virtual Academy (AVA) to be hosted by National Information Technology Centre (NITC) of Kyrgyzstan on a local server to lower access costs for domestic users.
- (iv) Translation of the Academy curriculum and the first eight issues of APCICT's Briefing Note Series into Tajik in cooperation with an NGO called Open Society Institute – Assistance Foundation (OSI-AF).

## SUMMARY TABLE

<b>Area of Activity</b>	<b>Lead Executive Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development	UNECE	2011
Capacity-building on legal aspect of ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce	UNECE	2011
Strengthening capacity to forecast extreme weather events in Asia	ESCAP	2011
Strengthening regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific	ESCAP	2011
Capacity-building on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders - National Roll-Outs and the APCICT Virtual Academy	ESCAP/APCICT	2011



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