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Item 8(d) of the provisional agenda

Laying the foundation in the UNECE region for greater integration, economic development and achievement of the sustainable development goals: joint conference

Laying the foundation in the UNECE region for economic integration and sustainable development towards 2030

Proposal by the Government of Belarus to organize, with UNECE, an International Conference on economic integration and sustainable development towards 2030.

I. Time and venue

The Conference will take place during 1.5 days in Minsk, Belarus, between the 24th and 28th October 2016.

II. Background

The year 2017 will mark the 70th anniversary of the historic ECOSOC resolution that established the Economic Commission for Europe. Today, 70 years later, Europe is facing new challenges: the world has become interdependent. Volatility in the currency and commodity markets, the growth of international competition due to the emergence of new major economies, financial crises and humanitarian catastrophes as the consequences of local conflicts – constitute key factors in determining the economic life of Europe.

Almost every day, the strength of economies in the UNECE region is challenged, testing their competitiveness at the world stage, the ability to ensure sustainable development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the entire region.

One response to modern challenges is evidenced by the global trend towards regional integration. This permits pooling resources to more effectively confront crises. Regional integration takes place first of all among neighbouring countries, through economic or customs unions and free trade zones.

An important part of the European economic dialogue is the search for ways to create positive cooperation and prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between countries

and subregions. To this end, it is vital to strengthen discussions that already take place within the UNECE committees and working bodies, on finding additional synergies, removing barriers and laying the foundations for greater economic integration in the UNECE region towards 2030.

To further progress this dialogue, the Government of Belarus and UNECE¹ propose to organize an International Conference to review the current foundation in the UNECE region for greater integration, economic development and achievement of the sustainable development goals and to make proposals on further work to the jubilee 70th session of the UNECE in March 2017.

III. Participants

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Executive Secretary of UNECE will invite all UNECE member States and all key organizations working in the pan-European region on the economic aspects of the SDGs, including EAEU, EU, CIS, OECD and EBRD, and other representatives from interested organization, public, financial and academic institutions.

IV. Outcome

The outcome of the conference will be a conference volume edited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Executive Secretary of UNECE to be submitted to the 67th session of the UNECE – UNECE at 70 – and to the third session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) and the eleventh session of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public Private Partnerships (CICPPP) in 2017.

V. Organisation

The conference will be officially co-hosted by the Government of Belarus and UNECE. An organizational committee will be co-chaired by Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs from Belarus and Mr. Christian Friis Bach, UNECE Executive Secretary.

VI. Draft programme

NOTE: ALL speakers, except the UNECE Executive Secretary are to be confirmed as well as the titles of their speeches

Welcome

- 1) President or Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus
- 2) Executive Secretary of UNECE

¹ As a joint initiative of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) and the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public Private Partnerships (CICPPP).

Opening session: Competitiveness in the UNECE Region

(a) Key factors in promoting Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness

Mr. Jyrki Katainen, European Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness

(b) Potential Areas for Cross-Border Cooperation in Support of Competitiveness

Ms. Tatyana Valovaya, Member of the Board and Minister for the Development of Integration and Macroeconomics, Eurasian Economic Commission

(c) Trends in Economic Competitiveness across the UNECE Region

Ms. Jennifer Blanke, Chief Economist, World Economic Forum

(d) Economic Integration its Impact on Competitiveness

Mr. Yevgeny Vinokurov, Head of the Economic Analysis Department, Eurasian Development Bank

Thematic sessions (2 hours each)

Each thematic session will have a moderator and a maximum of three speakers each. Among the speakers, one should represent transition economies, other western economies and the third international organizations or academia.

A. Trade and Standards

Moderator: Mr. Valery Koreshkov, Belarussian Vice Chair of UNECE WP.6 and Minister responsible for Regulatory and Standardization issues in the EurAsian Economic Commission

(a) Standards Are Essential for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Ms. Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha, Vice President of ISO and CEO of Austrian Standards.

(b) Harmonized Implementation of Standards – A Key to Increasing Economic Competitiveness

Mr. Alexander Zazhigalkin, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency on Technical Regulation and Metrology of the Russian Federation

OR Mr. Valery Hurevich, Director of the Belarussian State Institute of Metrology (BelGIM), and previously Director of the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Belarus

OR Mr. Viktor Nazarenko, Director of the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Belarus).

(c) Facilitating the Development of Cross-Border Value Chains

Mr. Bernard Hoekman, Professor and Programme Director, Global Economics at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute and Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Action Council on Supply Chains and Logistics, Former Director at the World Bank.

B. Transport and Infrastructure

Moderator: NN tbd

(a) Impact of the US inter-state highway network on the economic development of the United States of America

Speaker from US DOT or academia.

(b) Impact of the Transport Single Market on cohesion of the European Union

Speaker from European Commission.

(c) Impact of the transport infrastructure agreements and projects on inter-regional integration and competitiveness

Speaker tbd.

(d) Transport and logistics services influence on national competitiveness

Speaker tbd.

C. Energy and the Green Economy

Moderator: Mr. Julian Popov, Fellow and adviser to the European Climate Foundation (ECF)

OR Dr. John M. Christensen, Director, UNEP-Technical University of Denmark (DTU) Partnership

(a) Achieving Sustainable and Secure “Energy for All”

Mr. Jeffrey Logan, Group Manager for the Market and Policy Impact Analysis Group, Strategic Energy Analysis Centre, United States’ National Renewable Energy Laboratory

OR Dr. Steven Stone, Director, Chief of UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch.

(b) Changing Global and Regional Energy Trading Dynamics and their Impact on “Green Development”

Ms. Nargis Kassenova, Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations and Regional Studies of KIMER University (Kazakhstan) and Director of the KIMER Central Asian Studies Centre (CASC)

(c) Cross-border Opportunities in Renewable Energies

Mr. George V. Ermolenko, Head of the Centre for Renewable Energy Development, Energy Institute of the Moscow High School of Economics OR Mr. Janez Kopac, Director, Energy Community in Austria OR Mr. John Michael Roberts, Energy Security Specialist, MeThinks Ltd and Non-resident Sr. Fellow, Dinu Patriciu, Eurasia Centre and Global Energy Centre of the Atlantic Council

D. Investment and Innovation

Moderator: Mr. Aleksandr Zaborovsky, Belarussian First Deputy Minister of Economy OR
Mr. Maksim Ermolovich, First Deputy Minister of Finance

(a) Cross border investments for economic development – the case for PPPs

Mr. Art Smith, Chairperson UNECE Team of Specialists on PPPs , President, Management Analysis, Incorporated (MAI) and President, United States’ National Council for Public-Private Partnerships AND Ms. Irina Zapatrina, Chairperson of the Board of Ukrainian PPP Development Support Centre

(b) Innovation - a key to accessing and profiting from cross-border value chains

Mr. Dominique Foray, Chairperson, UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies. Professor at EPFL, member of the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council AND Mr. Salvatore Zecchini, Vice chairperson, UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs and a recognized author on enterprise and entrepreneurship issues
