



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

SPECA/WG-Trade/2020/EN/1

Fifteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade

Online session - 16 November 2020

Tentative Agenda¹

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) are organizing the fifteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade on 16 November 2020, before the 2020 SPECA Economic Forum *Regional-Cooperation to Support Socioeconomic Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19* and the fifteenth session of the SPECA Governing Council (18-20 November 2020). The Working Group supports cross-border and regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in Central Asia, in the area of sustainable trade, (notably SDG targets 17.10 and 17.11). The session will focus on the deliverables of the SPECA Working Group on Trade:

- (1) discuss collaboration among the SPECA countries in facing the COVID-19 crisis and in building joint positions in the WTO process;
- (2) progress in the implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and related roadmap;
- (3) further development and implementation of the Principles for Sustainable Trade in the subregion; and
- (4) studies and recommendations on non-tariff barriers to trade in the subregion in the age of the pandemic.

The event will review national and regional plans and strategies of the SPECA countries for sustainable trade development and facilitation and strengthen cooperation among trade diplomats of the SPECA countries. Participants in the session and SPECA participating countries are requested to contribute their good practices and identify priority actions the SPECA Working Group on Trade could work on in the coming 2-3 years.

Target audience: trade policymakers from the SPECA countries.

H.E. Mr. Abdurakhmon Abdurakhmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade, will lead the fifteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade. Its overall objectives are to foster exchange of experiences and mutual assistance among the SPECA countries, to implement trade facilitation and achieve the trade-related SDGs; review a regional trade facilitation strategy and encourage the development of a regional private sector network in support of these objectives.

¹ For information, please contact Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (e-mail: mario.apostolov@un.org; tel.: +41 22 917 11 34) and Mr. Alexey Kravchenko, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Trade Policy and Facilitation Division (e-mail: kravchenkoa@un.org, tel. +66 2288 1628)

Time²

13:00 – 13:15 **Welcoming remarks (3-5 min each):**

Mr. Abdurakhmon Abdurakhmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade opens and moderates this session

- Mia Mikic, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
- Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE
- High-level representative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan as the hosting country chairing SPECA in 2020 (Ministry of Economy, t.b.c.)

13:15 – 13:25 **Session 1: Report of the Chair of the SPECA WG on Trade**

13:25 – 13:45 **Session 2: Non-tariff measures, trade facilitation and sustainability in post COVID-19 recovery among SPECA countries**

Presentations:

- Yann Duval and Alexey Kravchenko, ESCAP - Navigating Non-tariff Measures towards Sustainable Development and Good Practices for Trade Facilitation in times of crisis and pandemic
- Mario Apostolov, UNECE - Implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and the Principles of Sustainable Trade; Initial stage on the work on a regional study on non-tariff measures/barriers in the SPECA subregion
- Larisa Kislyakova, UNECE consultant - Harmonizing border crossing procedures and implementing SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy, tbc
- Statements from development partners in the region, t.b.c.

13:45 – 15:15 **Session 3: Perspectives of the SPECA countries (10 min each):**

- Afghanistan
- Azerbaijan
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

² Almaty and Bishkek time

15:15 – 15:45 **Session 4: Report on recent activities, updated programme of work and adoption of decisions:**

Brief statements by ESCAP and UNECE

- ESCAP: Mr. Yann Duval
- UNECE: Mr. Mario Apostolov

Discussion:

- Ideas and plans to enhance policy cooperation, trade facilitation and sustainable trade under SPECA: Guidance from SPECA participating countries to the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats.

15:45 – 16:00 **Q&A and wrap up**

Mr. Abdurakhmonzoda and brief statements from ESCAP and UNECE