



Regional Dialogue

Strengthening transport connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond in the era of COVID-19

Geneva (online)
29 September 2020, 10.00 AM CET

Lack of territorial access to the sea and high transport and transit costs impose constraints on the overall socio-economic development and trade competitiveness of the countries that are part of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), all of which are landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) too. LLDCs pay more than double what coastal countries do to export their goods and high trade costs erode the competitiveness of the LLDCs resulting in an enormous negative impact on their overall sustainable development.

The current situation in the world caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has revealed a number of economic problems that require coordinated action by all countries and international organizations. Amongst others, consolidated approaches are required in such critical area as international inland transport and connectivity. Lockdowns, border closures and restrictions imposed by countries as part of measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have caused serious disruptions of supply chains and citizen's mobility, which have exacerbated consequences for LLDCs, including the SPECA countries.

The Regional Dialogue is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and Pacific, the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices in SPECA countries, Georgia and Turkey.

The overall objective of the Regional Dialogue is to facilitate an inclusive discussion and coordinate actions and plans on harmonization of international inland transport procedures to enhance connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond, especially at times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions will be guided by the UN transport-related legal framework, Outcome of the 1st International Conference on sustainable transport, the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, as well as the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 pandemic. The event will geographically cover countries that are part of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies in Central Asia (SPECA Programme), namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and beyond, including Georgia and Turkey.

AGENDA

29 September 2020

09.30 – 10.00 Connection and testing

10.00 – 10.25 Welcome/ Opening speech

Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE (confirmed)

Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (video message) (confirmed)

HE Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkmenistan (confirmed)

Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, Director, DCO Regional Office in Europe and Central Asia (confirmed)

Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, acting Head, ESCAP Sub-regional Office for North and Central Asia (confirmed)

10.25– 12.30 Session I. Policies and regulations for transport connectivity and legal framework for enhanced international transport

Mr. Yuwei Li, Director, Sustainable Transport Division, UNECE (7 min) (confirmed)

Mr. Weimin Ren, Director, Transport Division, ESCAP (7 min) (confirmed)

Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Programme Officer, Landlocked Developing Countries Unit, UN-OHRLLS (7 min) (confirmed)

Moderator: Mr. Nenad Nikolic, Regional Advisor, UNECE

- Key successes in inland transport infrastructure development (roads, railways, inland waterways and intermodal), transport connectivity, and plans (special emphasis on railways and terminals/dry ports). Key successes in inland transport operations, development of intermodal solutions, border crossing facilitation, future plans (special emphasis on how road and rail operations are changing to meet the needs of national, international and transit traffic). Interventions should highlight additional challenges in transport connectivity triggered by COVID-19 pandemic and propose recommendations on addressing them, including through the use of UN legal framework in the area of transport.
- HE Mr. Mohammad Yamma Shams, Acting Minister of Public Works, The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (confirmed)
- Mr. Elmir Velizadeh, Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, Republic of Azerbaijan (confirmed)
- Mr. Akaki Saghirashvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia (confirmed)
- Mr. Ruslan Baimishev, Deputy Minister of Industry and Infrastructural Development, Kazakhstan (confirmed)
- Mr. Talantbek Soltobaev, Deputy Minister of Transport and Roads, Kyrgyz Republic (confirmed)
- Mrs. Shoista Saidmurodzoda, Deputy Minister of Transport, Tajikistan (confirmed)

- Mr. Azat Atamyradov, Chairman/State Minister of Türkmen demirýollary, Turkmenistan (confirmed)
- Mr. Davron Dekhkanov, Deputy Minister of Transport, Uzbekistan (confirmed)

Q&A

12.30 – 12.50 Break

12.50 – 13.50 Session II. Multi-stakeholder cooperation on regional connectivity, transport corridors and integrated multimodal transport systems

Ms. Ashita Mittal, Regional Representative for Central Asia, UNODC (7 min) (confirmed)

Mr. Konstantinos Alexopoulos, Chief of Section, Sustainable Transport Division UNECE (7 min) (confirmed)

Ms. Azhar Jaimurzina Ducrest, Chief of Section, Transport Division ESCAP (7 min) (confirmed)

Moderator: Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, acting Head, Sub-regional Office for North and Central Asia, ESCAP

- Successful stories in development of inland transport infrastructure and horizontal measures, in the last five years, to promote regional transport connectivity, and interventions and plans to mitigate challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic in SPECA region.
- Mr. Pawan Karki, Senior Transport Specialist and Transport Team Leader for Uzbekistan, ADB/CAREC (confirmed)
- Ms. Ekaterina Miroshnik, Director, Head for Infrastructure-Eurasia, EBRD (confirmed)
- Mr. Gavin Dunnett, Director, Head of Mobility Department, EIB (confirmed)
- Mr. Omar Mehyar, Global Lead Transport Specialist, Economic and Social Infrastructure Department, IsDB (confirmed)
- Mr. Antonio Nunez, Sector Leader for Infrastructure and Connectivity in Central Asia, The World Bank (confirmed)

Comments/Interventions from the floor

Q&A

13.50 Conclusions and Closing statements