

ESCAP

United Nations Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia and the Pacific



UNECE

United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)

**2020 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM**

*“Regional Cooperation to Support Socioeconomic Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19”*

**18-19 November 2020**

**(UTC+6)**

**Virtual Modality**

<b>Provisional Programme</b>	
<b>Wednesday, 18 November 2020</b>	
	<b>Opening of the 2020 SPECA Economic Forum</b>
09:00 – 09:30	The opening of the Forum will include welcome statement by the 2020 SPECA Chair country-Kyrgyzstan, and opening remarks by the Executive Secretaries of ESCAP and UNECE, UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan
	<b>Session I: High-Level Policy Dialogue on “Regional Cooperation to Support Socioeconomic Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19”</b>
	Presentation on ESCAP Policy Brief <b>“COVID-19 in the North and Central Asia: Impacts, Responses and Strategies to Build Back Better”</b> - ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia
	Presentation on <b>“Mitigating the Effect of the COVID-19 Crisis for the Economies of the SPECA Countries”</b> - UNECE
09:30 – 11:00	The High-Level Policy Dialogue will discuss regional cooperation strategies to support socioeconomic recovery in the wake of COVID-19 in SPECA countries. During this session, heads of delegation of SPECA participating countries are welcome to make statements and provide their views with regard to the theme topic.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Afghanistan</li><li>- Azerbaijan</li><li>- Kazakhstan</li><li>- Kyrgyzstan</li><li>- Tajikistan</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Turkmenistan</li> <li>- Uzbekistan</li> </ul>
11:00 – 13:00	<p><b>Session II: Regional Transport Connectivity to Build Resilient Supply Chains</b></p> <p>Though SPECA participating countries have entered bilateral and plurilateral transport and transit-related agreements there are still some barriers and gaps to their enhanced integration. The impact of COVID-19 highlights the importance of a regional cooperation and coordination to facilitate transport connectivity and to restore and build resilience in the supply chains.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transport Division, ESCAP</li> <li>- Asian Development Bank (ADB) - tbc</li> <li>- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) - tbc</li> <li>- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) – tbc</li> <li>- Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) – tbc</li> </ul> <p>Followed by discussion.</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 16:00	<p><b>Session III: Cross-Border Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade for Inclusive and Efficient Recovery</b></p> <p>SPECA participating countries need to maintain and enhance trade and economic relations both within the region and with their major trading partners in the wake of COVID-19. The Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific as an inclusive collaboration platform can help in fast and efficient recovery. There are new challenges to trade facilitation in the era of COVID-19, but trade facilitation reforms and paperless trade implementation must go on, reducing person-to-person contacts.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNECE on Implementing the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and Principles of Sustainable Trade</li> <li>- Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP</li> <li>- Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) - tbc</li> <li>- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) - tbc</li> <li>- Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) – tbc</li> </ul> <p>Followed by discussion.</p>

<b>Thursday, 19 November 2020</b>	
09:00 – 10:45	<p><b>Session IV: Realizing Digital Potential for Sustainable Economic Transformation in the Wake of COVID-19</b></p> <p>For the last decade structural economic transformation is at the centre of national development plans of Landlocked Developing Countries. The impact of COVID-19 highlights the role of digital technologies for sustainable transformation strategies to ensure no one is left behind in our recovery efforts. Building an inclusive digital economy and society is instrumental in achieving the Agenda 2030. The “UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 noted that “The integration of international norms and standards in the design and implementation of socio-economic responses is as critical as ever.” These include the UN standards for electronic document equivalents, which are offered by the UN for the harmonization of information exchange.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia on “Realizing Digital Potential in North and Central Asia” paper</li> <li>- UNECE on “Support the Digitalization of Trade and Transport Information Flows, Digital Corridors and Single Window Systems Using UN Standards” - tbc</li> <li>- Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) - tbc</li> <li>- International Data Corporation (IDC) - tbc</li> <li>- International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – tbc</li> </ul> <p>Followed by discussion.</p>
10:45 – 12:30	<p><b>Session V: Economic Policies and Financing Strategies to Support Socioeconomic Recovery</b></p> <p>Concerted fiscal and monetary measures are critical to support socioeconomic recovery. Mobilization of adequate resources and financing strategies are also needed to sustain such a recovery, while remaining cognizant of potential adverse implications of prolonged expansionary policies. The discussion will be focused on fiscal and monetary measures and financing strategies introduced by SPECA countries since the onset of COVID-19, with a view to analyse their effectiveness. Implications of these policies for the medium-term stability of economies and their alignment with the 2030 Agenda will also be discussed.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, ESCAP</li> </ul> <p>Followed by discussion.</p>

12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 15:30	<p><b>Session VI: Moving Forward: Building Back Better with View to Implement the Sustainable Development Goals</b></p> <p>COVID-19 crisis created a lot of challenges, but also provided new opportunities. Appropriate and timely actions could not only assist with fast recovery from COVID-19, but also accelerate SDGs implementation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be kept at the core of the socioeconomic recovery efforts in the wake of COVID-19. With view to help SPECA participating countries in their actions for fast socioeconomic recovery, the SDGs drivers’ framework will be introduced during this session.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia on “SDG Drivers’ Framework for North and Central Asia” paper</li><li>- Environmental Division, Timber and Housing and/or Economic Cooperation Division, UNECE - tbc</li><li>- UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) – tbc</li></ul> <p>Followed by discussion.</p>
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Wrap-up and Closing of the 2020 SPECA Economic Forum</b>