Since 2017, Uzbekistan has been undergoing a wide range of reforms to make the transition to a market-based economy. Trade development is among the priorities of the Government’s reform agenda, including in the recently adopted Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026”.

Uzbekistan is actively pursuing both regional and global integration. As chair of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) in 2021, Uzbekistan has actively shaped deliberations of the SPECA Working Groups. To strengthen regional cooperation and implementation of investment projects, the Government hosted the first meeting of the SPECA Investment and Financial Cooperation Working Group in Uzbekistan in 2021. With respect to global integration efforts, recent reforms also indicate the Government’s commitment to joining the WTO. With the Working Party for the accession of Uzbekistan resuming its work in 2020, the country has stressed its determination to accelerate WTO accession negotiations and related reforms, including during the Tashkent International Investment Forum in March 2022.

Reforms to date have borne fruit. The economic outlook of Uzbekistan shows an upward trend since 2017, despite a slight slowdown due to the pandemic. Significant progress has been made in relation to trade facilitation reforms, also in line with the trade facilitation strategy for SPECA countries. As a result, Uzbekistan was one of the few economies to avoid negative growth in 2020. Its economy grew by 7.4 per cent in 2021.

Maintaining this upward growth requires addressing remaining challenges and building a resilient, sustainable, and diversified economy post-COVID-19. To support the Government’s efforts in promoting trade, UNECE undertook an assessment of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Uzbekistan. This assessment was carried out in 2021–2022 in close cooperation with the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The conducted study elaborates on the state of play vis-à-vis the following areas: trade facilitation, technical regulations and standardization, conformity assessment systems and metrology. Particular focus is given to the profile of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and their challenges in harnessing the benefits of trade. The study also provides three business process analyses in the sectors of textiles, electronics, dried fruits and vegetables, and handicrafts. Finally, the study presents recommendations for related internal reforms and initiatives.

About the Event

This event will discuss the ongoing trade reforms in Uzbekistan and suggest the way forward, taking into consideration ongoing accession to the WTO and other regional processes. It will furthermore feature key findings and recommendations of the study (executive summary in English and Russian). It will also suggest entry points for the type and nature of assistance that UNECE could provide to Uzbekistan in the future.
AGENDA

27 June, 11:00-12:00, hybrid, English-Russian-French interpretation

Moderation

- Ms. Damegul Kabiyeva, Chair, Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Opening remarks

- Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE
- H.E. Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Mr. Xiangchen Zhang, Deputy Director-General, WTO
- Ms. Roli Asthana, UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan

Expert and stakeholder discussion on the regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Uzbekistan

- Representatives from Uzbekistan (Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Agency for Technical Regulation, Customs Committee)
- Representatives from the Geneva trade community (WTO, UNCTAD, ITC)

The way forward for the future cooperation

- Representatives of member States and potential donors
- Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE