

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)

2022 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM ON “GREENER AND SAFER FUTURE”

16-17 November 2022
Almaty, Kazakhstan and online**TENTATIVE PROGRAMME**

Wednesday, 16 November 2022	
08:15-08:45	Registration of participants
08:45-09:00	Group Photo
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Opening of the 2022 SPECA Economic Forum</p> <p>Moderators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP • Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE <p>Welcome statement by H.E. Mr. Alibek Kuantyrov, Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the current Chair country of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)</p> <p>Opening remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP (<i>pre-recorded remarks</i>) - Ms. Olga Algayerova, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of UNECE (<i>pre-recorded remarks</i>) <p>Special welcome remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Gwi Yeop Son, UN Development Coordination Office, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia

09:30 – 11:00	<p>Session I: High-Level Policy Dialogue on Greener and Safer Future in the SPECA Region</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inherent vulnerabilities in the economies of the SPECA participating countries which have relied on resource-based, short-term economic growth at the expense of long-term sustainability. In going forward, recovery should be greener, inclusive, and safer with improved social, health and environmental protection systems.</p> <p>The high-level policy dialogue will discuss regional cooperation strategies to support greener and safer future. During this session, heads of delegation of the SPECA participating countries and other experts will provide their views about water, climate change, other environmental and social issues.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan</p> <p>Presentations by the Heads of delegation of the SPECA countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Mr. Samad Bashirli, Deputy Minister of Economy, Azerbaijan - H.E. Mr. Abzal Abdikarimov, Vice Minister of National Economy, Kazakhstan - H.E. Mr. Kanatbek Abdrahmanov, Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce, Kyrgyzstan - H.E. Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Tajikistan - H.E. Mr. Serdar Jorayev, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy, Turkmenistan - H.E. Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade, Uzbekistan (TBC) <p>Keynote speaker: Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan</p>
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 13:00	<p>Session II: Economic security and resilience: leaving no one behind</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic and its wider socioeconomic impacts particularly affected vulnerable population groups. High inflation and volatile economic conditions also further exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. It is imperative that policies will aim to mitigate these socioeconomic impacts, considering the fundamental principle of leave no one behind.</p> <p>The pandemic induced developmental challenges provide a unique opportunity for SPECA participating countries to repurpose policy priorities to make economies more resilient to future pandemics, disasters</p>

	<p>and crises. Such policies should ensure inclusiveness, harnessing regional cooperation and regional connectivity, promoting the SDGs and other international commitments and standards.</p> <p>As the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in dire consequences across all spectrums of the economic and social development globally, cities have become the key players in addressing its impacts as well as in restarting the economy, “building back better” and, as one important aspect, promoting urban resilience in the increasingly urbanizing region.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Roli Asthana, UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan</p> <p>Presentation by Mr. Shuvojit Banerjee, Officer-in-Charge, Macroeconomic Policy and Analysis Section, Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division, ESCAP</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Sohail Khan, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation • Mr. Akzan Shiranov, Director, Department of Ecology Policy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, Kazakhstan • Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC ICWC) • Ms. Tamara Kutonova, Manager, National Policy Dialogue Programme, Environment Division, UNECE • Mr. Abdurahim Muhidov, Regional Program Coordinator, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) • Mr. Dmitry Pozhidaev, Regional Technical Advisor at United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) <p>Followed by open discussion</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 16:00	<p>Session III: Sustainable economic transformation</p> <p>Economies which rely on natural resources and remittances are vulnerable with external risks. The commodity price fluctuations expose countries to external shocks, which impacts countries’ fiscal space, currency value and trade balance. Additionally, the expansion of extractive industries in some of the SPECA participating countries created limited job opportunities and brought about negative environmental externalities.</p> <p>Despite the recorded economic growth in past decades, the overall development model remained less effective in developing knowledge-based economy, reducing informal employment, encouraging non-commodity export, and promoting inclusive economic growth. As resource-driven growth shows its limitations and the threat of climate</p>

	<p>change looms, countries in the subregion are increasingly prioritizing economic diversification and green transition strategies. Concerted policies are required to accelerate sustainable economic transformation.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu, UN Resident Coordinator in Tajikistan</p> <p>Keynote speaker: Mr. Haoliang Xu, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Director, Bureau of Policy and Programmes, UNDP</p> <p>Presentation by Mr. Yusuke Tateno, Economic Affairs Officer, Section on Countries in Special Situations, Office of the Executive Secretary, ESCAP</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Kairat Torebayev, Vice-Minister of Trade and Integration, Kazakhstan • Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director, International Think Tank for LLDCs • Mr. Hans Holzhaecker, Chief Economist, CAREC Institute • Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE • Mr. Andrzej Bolesta, Economic Affairs Officer, Productive Capacities and Sustainable Development Branch, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD <p>Followed by open discussion</p>
<p>16:00 – 16:15</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>16:15 – 18:00</p>	<p>Session IV: Sustainable energy transition</p> <p>The expansion of conventional energy sources and the initiation of market reforms allowed countries to establish a stable energy supply and benefit from energy trade.</p> <p>However, challenges remain in terms of energy efficiency, energy security and diversification. Technological innovation and advancements in energy that drive down renewable energy costs made sustainable energy development more affordable. In the past decade, energy transition plans have been set in the national strategies of SPECA participating countries.</p> <p>Accelerated efforts to promote sustainable energy transition including in transport sector, is needed to realize the potential gains of energy security and to build readiness to a new energy paradigm.</p> <p>The key accelerator for the energy transition is finance. The session will also explore ways IFIs, the private sector and the capital markets can finance the uptake of renewable energy, green energy technologies and support the energy transition.</p>

	<p>Moderator: Mr. Dmytro Shlapachenko, UN Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan</p> <p>Presentation by Mr. Sergey Tulinov, Economic Affairs Officer, Energy Division, ESCAP and Ms. Iva Brkic, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Energy Division, UNECE</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Alma Zhukenova, Deputy Director, Department of Renewable Energy Sources, Ministry of Energy, Kazakhstan • Mr. Binu Parthan, Head of Regions, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) • Mr. Charles Cormier, Infrastructure Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank • Ms. Indira Zankina, Banker, Energy Eurasia and MEA, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development • Mr. Arman Ahunbaev, Head, Center for Infrastructure and Industrial Research, Eurasian Development Bank • Mr. Juergen Keinhorst, Chairperson, UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy <p>Followed by open discussion</p>
18:30 – 20:30	Dinner Reception on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan
Thursday, 17 November 2022	
09:00 – 11:00	<p>Session V: Digital transformation – leveraging digital opportunities</p> <p>Digital technologies are transforming global economies and societies at unprecedented speed. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated usages and adoption of digital technologies as governments impose strict measures to control the spread of the virus.</p> <p>Digital readiness and capacity, access to the high-speed broadband services proved as keys to contain COVID-19 disease, mitigating the devastating socioeconomic impacts, and to prepare for fast recovery. Digital transformation has become one of the top policy priorities for SPECA participating countries.</p> <p>The session will discuss areas for subregional cooperation and actions that promote connectivity for all, digital technology applications and digital data as underlying foundations for building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient digital economy and society. It will also discuss how cross-border investment can support digital transformation.</p> <p>It will also share the main findings of the Asia-Pacific Digital Transformation Report 2022, and the key outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Digital Ministerial Conference: Shaping Our Digital Future (10 November 2022, Seoul, Republic of Korea).</p>

	<p>Moderator: Ms. Vladanka Andreeva, UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan</p> <p>Presentation by Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, ESCAP</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Dastan Yeleukenov, Chairman, Executive Board, Kazakhstan Agency for International Development “KazAID” • Mr. Bakhtier Rizaev, Head, Artificial Intelligence Department, Single Integrator, UZINFOCOM, Uzbekistan • Mr. Rauf Guliyev, Head of Digital Customs Administration Department, State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan • Ms. Ekaterina Genkina, International Expert on Change Management • Ms. Maira Zhunusova, Associate Professor, Civil Aviation Academy, Kazakhstan • Mr. Konstantinos Alexopoulos, Chief of Section, Sustainable Transport Division, UNECE • Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE <p>Followed by open discussion</p>
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 13:00	<p>Session VI: Gender equality and women’s empowerment</p> <p>SPECA participating countries have achieved substantial progress in expanding opportunities for women and girls in the economic realm in the last decades across the public and private sectors underpinned by legal reforms and policies at various levels. The advancement of women, however, remains slow, uneven across industries and occupations, and varies by countries. Gender disparities are recorded in the labour force participation rate, in mean years of schooling, and among youth not in education, employment or training. These disparities are expected to worsen because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women have been hit harder than men as they tend to earn less and dominate in sectors that have suffered the most from closures during lockdowns and restrictions imposed to combat the spread of the COVID-19. The loss of income from employment, remittances, and other sources, including informal economy as well as increased domestic care responsibilities and risks of domestic violence, have worsened the living and health conditions of women both in urban and rural areas in the SPECA countries. The increased burden of unpaid care of women as schools closed during lockdowns has made many women drop out of the labour market, thus reducing their economic security amid growing uncertainties for re-joining gainful employment.</p>

	<p>Inclusive policies need to be in place to ensure women’s equal participation in all areas of socioeconomic activities.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Antje Grawe, UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>Presentation by Mr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Sadagat Gahramanova, Deputy Chairperson, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of Azerbaijan and the Chairperson of the SPECA WG on Gender and SDGs • Ms. Aizhan Kalikanova, Chief Expert, Committee for Youth and Family Affairs, Ministry of Information and Social Development, Kazakhstan • Ms. Rachel Weston, Policy Specialist, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, UN Women • Mr. Yevgeniy Son, Coordinator, Women in Business Programme in Kazakhstan, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) • Ms. Merey Mustafina, UMay Project Lead, Women Entrepreneurship Day Ambassador for Central Asia and CIS <p>Followed by open discussion</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:00	Side event “Investment Trends and Policies in Central Asia: An exchange with UNECE, ESCAP and UNCTAD” (separate programme)
15:00 – 16:30	<p>Session VII: Wrap-up and Closing of the 2022 SPECA Economic Forum</p> <p>The Chairperson of the Forum will share the draft outcome document of the Forum “Almaty Declaration” followed by closing remarks.</p> <p>Closing remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP • Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE