



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

SPECA/WG-Trade/2023/EN/1 rev11

**Eighteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade**

Baku, 20 November 2023  
**Provisional Agenda<sup>1</sup>**

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 eighteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade on 20 November 2023, back-to-back with the annual SPECA events in Baku. The Working Group supports cross-border and regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in Central Asia (notably SDG targets 17.10 and 17.11) to advance green and sustainable trade. The session will focus on the deliverables of the SPECA Working Group on Trade:

- (1) collaboration among SPECA participating States in the WTO process,
- (2) progress in the implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and related roadmap,
- (3) progress in the implementation of the Principles for Sustainable Trade in the subregion,
- (4) studies and recommendations on regulatory and procedural non-tariff barriers to trade, and
- (5) digitalization of data and document exchange in multimodal transport and trade using UN standards.

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

**Target audience:** trade policymakers from the SPECA participating States.

**H.E. Mr. Ahliddin Nuriddinzoda**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade, will moderate the eighteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade. Its overall objectives are to foster exchange of experiences and mutual assistance among the SPECA States, achieve the trade-related SDGs, review the implementation of the regional trade facilitation strategy, principles of sustainable trade, standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange, elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade and encourage the development of a regional private sector network in support of these objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> For information, please contact Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (e-mail: [mario.apostolov@un.org](mailto:mario.apostolov@un.org); tel.: +41 22 917 11 34).

**Time<sup>2</sup> 10:00 – 17:00**

**Moderator: H.E. Mr. Ahliddin Nuriddinzoda**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade

10:00 – **Welcoming remarks (5 min each):**

- 10:35
- **H.E. Mr. Samed Bashirli**, Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan
  - **H.E. Mr. Kanatbek Abdrahmanov**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic
  - **H.E. Mr. Badriddin Abidov**, Deputy Minister of Investments, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan
  - **H.E. Mr. Ahliddin Nuriddinzoda**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade
  - **Ms. Elisabeth Türk**, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE
  - **Ms. Rupa Chanda**, Director, Trade, Investment, and Innovation Division, ESCAP

10:35 – **Item 1: Report of the Chairperson of the SPECA WG on Trade**

10:50

*10:50 - 11:00 Coffee break*

11:00 – **Item 2: Collaboration of the SPECA countries in the WTO process**

- 11:45 Discussion led by **Ms. Gülchin Alasgarova**, Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan
- **H.E. Mr. Badriddin Abidov**, Deputy Minister of Investments, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan
  - **H.E. Mr. Atageldi Haljanov**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations Office at Geneva

*Discussion*

11:45 – **Item 3: Trade facilitation and non-tariff barriers at a time of multiple crises**

12:30 **Presentations (5 min each):**

- **Mr. Yann Duval**, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, ESCAP, on the results of the UN Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation Survey 2023 and implications for SPECA
- **Ms. Larisa Kislyakova**, Chairperson of the Partnership on Transport and Logistics in Central Asia, and **Mr. Mario Apostolov**, Regional Adviser, ECTD, UNECE, on the implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy
- **Ms. Maria Teresa Pisani**, OiC, Trade Facilitation Section, ECTD, UNECE: highlights and recommendations of a Policy Report on digital and sustainable trade facilitation in countries with economies in transition - Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan
- **Mr. Ariel Ivanier**, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE: Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade and the way forward for the SPECA participating States

*Discussion*

*12:30 - 14:00 Lunch break*

14:00 – **Item 4: Digitalization of supply chain data exchange in the Trans-Caspian Corridor**

14:45 **Presentations:**

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<sup>2</sup> Baku time (GMT+4)

- **Ms. Sue Probert**, Chairperson, UN/CEFACT, and **Mr. Mario Apostolov**, Regional Adviser, ECTD, UNECE: on progress in implementing of the package of standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange in the SPECA region
  - **Mr. Goran Andreev**, Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia (TRACECA)
  - **Mr. Ziya Aghayev**, Consultant: Gap analysis of the readiness of Azerbaijan to implement the UN/CEFACT standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model
- Other presenters**

*Discussion*

**14:45 - 15:00 Coffee break**

- 15:00 – **Item 5: Perspectives of the SPECA States, discuss the five directions of work of the**  
16:30 **SPECA WG on Trade**  
**(10 min for each delegation of the SPECA participating States)**

Brief statements by ESCAP and UNECE and guided discussion led by ESCAP & UNECE on the Work Programme of the SPECA WG on Trade.

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

- 16:30 – **Conclusions and recommendations:**

17:00 Intervention by the Chairperson **H.E. Mr. Ahliddin Nuriddinzoda** and brief statements from ESCAP and UNECE